THE GOD OF THE LIBERAL CHRISTIAN

DANIEL S. ROBINSON

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THE GOD OF THE LIBERAL CHRISTIAN

A STUDY OF SOCIAL THEOLOGY AND THE NEW THEISM AS CONFLICTING SCHOOLS OF PROGRESSIVE RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

BY

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DANIEL SOMMER ROBINSON, JUNIOR

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PREFACE

Whoever has won an insight into the matchless truth of the Christian way of life needs no other guide than this insight to protect him from false philosophies of life. "My sheep hear my voice, and a stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers." The ultimate evidence for Christianity and the secret of its enduring power is to be found in the personal character and piety which living it produces. The Christian experience has a mysterious way of breeding true to itself. Even where theological tenets are most widely divergent, there is a striking similarity in the lives of devout disciples. A false theology need never prevent faithfulness to Christian living. This does not mean that doctrines are unimportant or unnecessary or that what theology one holds is a matter of complete indifference. It simply means that the Christian consciousness is more real than any or all of the theological systems and interpretations which it fabricates. Origen was exactly right when, in the preface to his *Contra Celsum*, he implied that a false theology will ultimately refute itself. The history of Christian doctrine proves that, just as the snake in growing a new skin sloughs off the old, so the Christian consciousness picks its way forward

through every narrowing and imprisoning theological construction, breaking its adhesive power and sloughing it off into desuetude. Hence he in whom Christian experience is genuine need not fear to enter the labyrinth of contemporary religious thought.

Yet who can make headway in its mazes without a chart? This essay aims to thread a path through this labyrinth. It sharply (some may think too sharply) distinguishes two leading types of progressive theology, and at the same time it indicates wherein both differ from orthodox theology, of which fundamentalism is the Protestant form. Thus an attempt is made to set into clear relief, against the background of traditional obscurantism, the essentials of a liberal Christian philosophy of life. It is hoped that the discussion may be of interest to clergymen, to teachers and students of theology, and to persons in all walks of life who are seeking light on their religious perplexities. Those who desire to read further will find that the numerous references in the footnotes constitute a fairly adequate bibliography.

The book is the fruit of an interest in religious thought which has persisted ever since it was thoroughly aroused during my student days by the lectures and writings of Professors A. K. Rogers, D. C. Macintosh, W. E. Hocking, and Georg Wobbermin. In 1918 the Yale University Press published my translation of the latter's *Christian Belief*

in God, a book which is the original source of the conception of God expounded at the end of Chapter IV.

I was teaching philosophy at the University of Wisconsin at the time that the late William Jennings Bryan delivered there his famous lecture against evolution, entitled "Brother or Brute," thereby initiating his well-known controversy with President E. A. Birge, formerly Professor of Zoology. On the invitation of Jesse M. Sarles, pastor at the University, I delivered a series of public lectures to stimulate the thinking of students on religious questions. Thanks to the splendid coöperation of Mr. Sarles and of his student cabinet, these discussions were largely attended, and at his request they were repeated the following year.

It was out of those discussions that this book grew. Owing to this origin, and to the fact that the book is intended for the general reader, certain statements may seem to some to be unduly dogmatic. Although I have tried to write with proper restraint, I fear that there may be critics who will think that I have overshot the mark. If such be the case, I can only vouchsafe the fervent hope that I have not missed it far enough either to give offense or to appear arrogant. I have learned too much from those whose views I have criticized to have any other sentiments toward them than appreciation of their intellectual honesty and gratitude for the truths they have taught.

D. S. R.

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THE GOD OF THE LIBERAL CHRISTIAN

Many of us who call ourselves liberal are not liberal; we are narrow rather, with that most fatal bigotry of all: we can understand nothing except contemporary thought.

HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK in *The Modern Use of the Bible.*

It is not the voice of the multitude but the voice of truth that has power with the conscience.

THOMAS CAMPBELL in the *Declaration and Address.*

Do you hear a deep voice calling?—
Calling persistently?—
Like the sound of God's great waters,—
Calling insistently?
'Tis the voice of our dead, our myriad dead,
Calling to you and me;—

"By the red deaths we have suffered,
By the fiery paths we trod,
By the lives we gave All Life to save,—
We call you back to God."

JOHN OXENHAM in *The Vision Splendid.*

Chapter I

THE CHIEF TYPES OF CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY

RELIGION, rooted as it is in man's inner sentiments, aspirations, and intimations, is in reality entirely distinct from natural science, whose only concern is with the explanation of perceptual reality or with the ordering of sense data. A conflict between these two great complementary aspects of human culture never develops until the intellectual interpretation of inner religious experience, known as theology, meets scientific views of the world. For a systematic theology, being constructed by a person primarily interested in religion, is almost certain to be the work of one to whom natural knowledge is largely a matter of secondary consideration and whose scientific conceptions are mainly elementary and traditional. Hence, in so far as natural knowledge is utilized in the theological construction at all, it is almost certain to be such popular science as the theologian has been able to glean from his general reading. Consequently every real advance in human knowledge of the natural world is bound to bring science into a new conflict with the existing theology.

In a certain sense such conflicts are between new and old science rather than between science and theology. That is to say, they are between science at its growing point, where it is entirely free from theology, and science as it is understood by the theologian, where it is subordinated to the dominant and controlling purpose of explaining inner religious experience by relating man to a higher reality than nature. Now when such a theological construction, with its filling of popular science, is passed on to the average man the situation for science becomes even worse, for who can expect ordinary people to distinguish what they know about nature from what they believe about God? Unquestionably science inevitably suffers in being transmitted by theologians to the masses of religious adherents.

This implies the practical warning that wise men should always take their science, not from theologians, but directly from scientists, and the wide circulation of popular scientific journals is eloquent testimony to the fact that in this enlightened age people are coming more and more so to do. However, this warning does not mean that all theologians are hostile to science. On the contrary, there have always been two types of theology, one of which has been both friendly and helpful, while the other has either held aloof from or been avowedly antagonistic to scientists. According to the former, the theologian must con-

stantly revise his doctrine of God and of the divine things to accord with the new discoveries of science. More accurately expressed, he must ever strive to make his interpretations of inner religious experience consistent with the scientist's interpretations of outer perceptual experience. Any theology which approaches its task with this friendly attitude toward science is a *progressive theology.* The type of theology which is hostile to science makes no serious attempt to square the dogmas of theology with modern natural knowledge, but unhesitatingly rejects all scientific teaching which is clearly in conflict with revealed truth. For literally interpreting St. Paul's great saying, "Whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away," they assume that the dogmas have been miraculously imparted to humanity by divine revelation, and that they have not only always been but will forever remain supreme over science. These supposedly divinely revealed dogmas constitute a type of theology which may conveniently be designated *orthodox revealed theology.*

The history of "the warfare of science and theology" clearly reveals the fact that these two types of religious thought have been in sharp opposition since almost the very dawn of Christianity, but more especially since the rise of modern experimental science, and that numberless major engagements have been fought through to

the latter end in the long course of this history. The popular present-day religious controversy over evolution and higher criticism is only one of the manifestations of this age-old conflict. Its chief interest is to be found in the fact that, being the latest popular expression of the inherent hostility between these two types of theology, it exhibits the warfare at the point where the battle is now fiercely raging among the masses. For is it not always more exciting to see and to participate in a good fight, than it is to read about one that was fought and won in a bygone age?

Not every one realizes to what an extent this current theological controversy divides each of the numerous sects of Christendom into warring camps. To be sure, nearly everybody in this country knows something about the particular manifestation of it in the non-liturgical Protestant sects which goes by the name of fundamentalism versus modernism. This is partly due to the fact that this type of Protestantism happens to be the dominant type of Christianity in the United States. But it is also due to the prominence of the leading protagonists for the respective sides. Such a spectacular figure as Mr. Bryan, who, after a long and stormy political career, devoted his superb oratorical powers to the very hour of his death defending a literal interpretation of Scripture against evolution, was

bound to attract wide public attention to the issue which he discussed. And when one of the outstanding Baptist clergymen of the world is called to the pastorate of a great historic Presbyterian Church, and is later not only charged with heresy before the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Churches of America, but is actually forced to resign his position, it is natural that his condemnation should awaken in the public mind an interest in his theology. Nor has this interest been in any way abated by the recent contract which the Rev. Mr. Fosdick has made with the Park Avenue Baptist Church in New York City, in ratifying which the members virtually adopted a modernist theology.

Yet in spite of the fact that it holds the popular attention more than other manifestations of the controversy between the liberal and the conservative elements in modern Christianity, the conflict between the fundamentalists and the modernists is no whit more significant to the student of contemporary religious thought than are they. Essentially the same warfare rages ferociously to-day within the Protestant Episcopal Church. Indeed, the recent controversies between the Rev. Mr. Percy Stickney Grant and Bishop Manning, and between the venerable rector, Dr. Leighton Parks, and the same Bishop, and more particularly the heresy trial of Bishop Brown in which his condemnation was finally affirmed by the full House

of Bishops, all of which are only special outbreaks of the conflict, have recently occupied the center of the theological stage even to the partial exclusion of the spectacular controversy between Mr. Bryan and Mr. Fosdick. Yet the truth is that these are only the excrescences of a mighty movement which has been gathering momentum for some years within the Protestant Episcopal Church of America and the Established Church of England.[1]

Then, too, the liberal movement within the Lutheran churches of America is even now fermenting and may soon produce an explosion in each of the large synods. And in Germany and the Scandinavian countries the Lutheran theological professors, pastors, and lay workers have been at swords' points on this issue for over a generation. Moreover, there is a similar movement in the Reformed Church, both in this country and abroad, especially in Holland.

Quite recently the liberal theologians have created a veritable furor within the Greek Orthodox Church. The New or Living Church party in

[1] See H. D. A. Major's article entitled "English Modernism," *Hibbert Journal,* Vol. XXII, pp. 782-794, and C. W. Emmet's "The Modernist Movement in the Church of England," *Journal of Religion,* Vol. II, pp. 561-577, for excellent accounts of this movement in the Church of England. Dr. Leighton Parks's book entitled *What Is Modernism?* is an interesting presentation of the theological viewpoint of an American Episcopalian modernist. Compare Dean Ralph Inge's "Confessio Fidei" in *Outspoken Essays,* 2nd Series.

Russia, openly championed and supported by the Soviet Government, has brought confusion worse confounded into the extremely conservative Russian branch of the Greek Orthodox Church. And Dr. Frank Gavin, after a protracted period of study in Athens, has recently made available to the English-speaking public the essentials of the liberal theology of the branch of the Greek Catholic Church centered in that historic city. When the size and the hitherto extremely conservative character of the Greek Catholic Church are taken into consideration, the cropping out of two separate modernist movements in it is of tremendous significance.[2]

The important modernist movement initiated by Father Tyrrell and Professor Loisy, and furthered by many distinguished prelates and prominent laymen, is a powerful leaven working in the orthodox theology of the Roman Catholic Church. Indeed it was in connection with this now historic development that the word modernist first came into general usage to designate liberal theologians.[3]

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[2] See Frank Gavin: *Some Aspects of Contemporary Greek Orthodox Thought.* In the Preface of this scholarly work, after naming the chief contemporary theologians of the Orthodox Church in the Greek circle of culture, the author remarks: "All of them are 'modern' in their point of view, alive to present-day difficulties, keenly interested in the progress of European scholarship, broad in the horizon of their sympathies, and utterly antagonistic to narrow insularity, complacency, and the position called 'obscurantist.'"

[3] See the article "Modernism" in Hastings' *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics,* Dean Ralph Inge's *Outspoken Essays,* 1st

Among the important branches of contemporary Christianity, the corrupt Coptic Church in Abyssinia, due to its almost complete isolation from the main streams of Christian culture, is probably the only one which remains practically unaffected by this progressive type of religious thought. Bishops, priests, pastors, teachers, missionaries, evangelists, lay workers in every denomination are to-day divided into two opposing groups, each of which is committed to a type of thought which is far more significant to the student of theology than the special tenets of any existing sect. For no matter what the particular group in which he has been reared or to which he adheres, a modernist is much nearer to modernists in other sects than he is to the conservatives in his own group. Denominational issues are dead issues to-day, at least among those aggressive people who really count. The controversy between the liberals and the conservatives is already beginning to supplant the older conflicts in the public mind.

He who would comprehend the religious thought of our age must unquestionably reckon with this controversy and with the extensive literature which it has produced and is producing. But how is one to understand a warfare, the battles of

Series, Chap. vi, and Alfred Loisy's *My Duel With the Vatican*. Although Loisy and Tyrrell were finally excommunicated, the modernism which they initiated continues to influence Catholic theology.

which are still furiously raging? The popular opinion seems to be that this movement is destined to become the outstanding development in the evolution of Christianity in this century. Yet one must be on his guard against taking it for granted that this popular opinion will necessarily be the verdict of history. Indeed the very magnitude of the current controversy indicates that it is at a comparatively late stage in its evolution, and that it must have had its beginning many years ago. Deeper down than the conflict between conservatism and modernism as expressed in popular controversies, is the creative Christian religious consciousness itself. It is the force which long ago started the present conflict. We must look for signs that this force is to-day at work originating other movements, whose deep significance is not likely to be fully recognized for another generation. The really vital movement in contemporary religious thought must be one which is just taking shape, and not one which is now dissipating its energies in mass conflict.

As a matter of fact the issue between modernism and fundamentalism was really fought out among educated, cultured people during the last half of the nineteenth century. But it takes time for ideas to filter down from intellectual circles to the masses. May not the present turmoil be simply the proof that the filtration is taking place? Looked at in this light it is a perfectly natural

development among the people, produced by ideas which were really created by the religious thinkers of the past generation. It is essentially a popular movement which looms large and foreboding to the uncritical mind because of its tremendous proportions at the present time. The real advance in religious thought to-day is taking place at another point, which is by no means unrelated to the great conflict now engaging the interests of the populace, and which can best be approached through a psychological explanation of that conflict, but which is really a distinctly new movement that is now only beginning to gather momentum. For it is a movement within progressive theology rather than a conflict between progressive theology and orthodox revealed theology. Let us follow up the suggestion which was just made and approach this new movement through a psychological explanation of the conflict between the liberals and the conservatives.

Restricting attention to the fundamentalist-modernist aspect of the present controversy, a psychological explanation of it should answer the following paramount questions: Why did Mr. Bryan attack evolution, or, as he preferred to call it, Darwinism? Why are the fundamentalists afraid of accepting the sure conclusions of scientific biblical research and of applying the truths of physical and social science to scriptural passages? And, on the other hand, why have edu-

cated people generally well-nigh unanimously resented the attempts of the fundamentalists to stifle free scientific inquiry? Why are the meliorists such ardent defenders of evolution? Perhaps the best glimpse of the advance movement within progressive theology is to be found in the light of a certain set of answers to these two pairs of questions. Beginning with the second pair let us state somewhat dogmatically, since it would take us too far afield to argue the matter, what are here assumed to be the correct answers to these portentous questions, and therewith the true psychological explanation of the fundamentalist-modernist controversy.

The question: Why do educated people resent the attempts of fundamentalists to stifle free scientific inquiry? is really quite distinct from the question: Why are the meliorists such ardent defenders of evolution? For the term "meliorists" is not equivalent to the term "educated people." The former refers to a special group of rather radical social theorists who favor a remaking of the social order, whereas the latter means the whole body of enlightened people who read widely and think for themselves. Surely all of those who have formed the habit of reading to post themselves as to what is going on in the world at large and who honestly try to form intelligent opinions on social, economic, political, æsthetic, moral and religious questions are entitled to be regarded as

educated people. The meliorists, however, are those select few among the *intelligentsia* who wholeheartedly subscribe to the new social philosophy of making a better world, and who interpret everything in terms of that particular social philosophy. The technical word, meliorism, was coined by William James from the Latin word, *melior*, meaning better. His statement of the theory in *Pragmatism* was part and parcel of his defense of monotheism. But to-day meliorism is a non-theistic, independent, and militant social philosophy. All the non-human powers, including the Creator, which James thought were aiding men in making a better world, are dropped out. There is nothing left but human intelligence, engaged in the Herculean task of creating a more perfect civilization with no hope of assistance. Thus the term meliorists refers to a much smaller group than is covered by the term educated people. And it also refers to a group motivated by the desire to promulgate a special social philosophy, whereas educated people are those whose chief aim is to comprehend the world in which they live. Consequently the two questions stated above are really quite distinct, and require, from our point of view, entirely separate answers.

First, then, why do educated people resent the attempts of fundamentalists to stifle free scientific inquiry. Since 1600 A.D. modern science has so demonstrated its theoretical conclusions by trans-

formations of the practical everyday life of the people that there has been built up among enlightened men and women an ineradicable respect for scientific research. The advances that have been made in such applied sciences as medicine, engineering, agricultural science, aeronautics, and what not, on the basis of results reached by theoretical investigators in actual laboratory and field research, have won for natural science a secure place in the esteem of all thinking people. Consequently, when the fundamentalists attempt to stifle free scientific inquiry, the educated common sense of the people who really control public opinion responds, not with the support accorded to their ignorant *confrères* of the Catholic Church at the dawn of modern science, by the aid of which a Bruno was burned at the stake, a Galileo was ignominiously forced to recant, and nameless other seekers after truth experienced the punitive force of the Inquisition; but, on the contrary, these modern persecutors of science are met with a stern opposition which is sure to become increasingly more relentless as they multiply their activities against the scientific spirit. Sooner or later fundamentalists will learn the utter futility of their attacking the free spirit of scientific inquiry, and of their attempting to block the teaching of the assured truths of modern learning. There is a strong body of intelligent opinion behind science to-day which is the psychological explanation for

the fact that fundamentalism finds little support among educated people for its ill-timed tirade against science.

Why, now, do the meliorists attack fundamentalism? Why do they ridicule men like the late Mr. Bryan for their stupidity and ignorance? Because these fundamentalists believe in a transcendent God and in the fruitfulness of prayer and worship. Because they very effectively oppose what they regard as the iniquitous naturalizing and secularizing of human life. Yes, too often it is precisely because of their honest loyalty to their religious and moral principles that the fundamentalists are branded by the meliorists as puritanical obstructionists of progress. Behind this hostility is the meliorists' conviction that the social order is itself the highest reality and is in an evolutionary process of melioration, a process whose full fruition depends upon eradicating from men's minds the fallacious idea that they are dependent upon God, so that they may learn to rely on themselves as a coöperating group. Since human society is a self-bettering, evolutionary process, men need to be taught the futility of worshiping a supermundane God and the supreme value of rational coöperation in the enterprise of creating a fairer social environment than we now know. Herein lies, according to the meliorists, the only possibility of humanity lifting itself to a higher cultural level. Every belief in a supernat-

ural being is a degrading superstition. The fundamentalists proclaim the moral responsibility of men and of all human institutions to God. Ergo they are stupid and ignorant. So argue the meliorists. May the fact that they hold a purely naturalistic theory of the origin, development and destiny of human society not be the psychological explanation of the meliorists' scathing denunciation of Mr. Bryan and the whole school of fundamentalists?

Now let us turn to the other pair of questions. Why did Mr. Bryan attack evolution? Why do the fundamentalists generally oppose every attempt of liberal thinkers to apply scientific knowledge to religious questions, especially to the study of sacred literature?

To answer the first of these questions we must, following the suggestion made in answering the preceding question, distinguish two radically different meanings of evolution. In the first place it means a *scientific doctrine* of the development, not only of organisms, including man and human society, but also of the earth and of the solar system and even of the sidereal universe. As such it is based upon numerous empirical facts and it is one of the best established general theories in the whole realm of science. The scientific doctrine of evolution is simply the exact expression, from our human point of view, of the actual facts and laws of growth and development in the universe. But

the word evolution has also come to mean the *philosophical dogma* that there is no reality and no aspect of reality other than the rapidly shifting evolutionary process. There is no God behind it or beneath it and no meaning or goal beyond it or above it. In other words, atheistic materialism has in our day clothed itself in evolutionary philosophy and seems bent on using the idea of evolution to browbeat religious faith, just as materialism has from the days of early Greek philosophy, always attempted to use science to root out religion. Mr. Bryan, being an honest and sincere religious man, felt the blows of this club, but being neither a scientist nor a philosopher, he was not able to distinguish the *scientific doctrine* from the *philosophical dogma* of evolution.[4] Hence he was forced to fight, as it were, beating the air, without directing his efforts against the real adversary, without thrusting his sword into the vitals of the real offender. Darwin was no enemy of the Christian religion. Mr. Bryan's mistake was in supposing that he was. Some of Darwin's numerous philosophical interpreters are deadly enemies of the Christian religion. But Mr. Bryan lacked the

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[4] In his chapter entitled "The Rise of the Doctrine of Evolution" in *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy,* the late Josiah Royce made this distinction very clear, so far as the evolutionary thought of the closing years of the nineteenth century is concerned, but the distinction needs to be strongly emphasized with special reference to the development of evolutionary philosophy since Royce wrote.

philosophical knowledge essential to an understanding of evolutionary naturalism. Nevertheless he was guided by a correct instinct when he fought back, even though his fighting was sometimes like that of a boy fighting bumblebees, for evolutionary naturalism is certainly the deadliest enemy of religious faith.

And why do the fundamentalists oppose the application of scientific methods to religious matters, especially to sacred literature? Bluntly stated, it is because their minds are darkened and obscured by the obsolete seventeenth century verbal inspiration theory of the Scriptures. One of the most interesting facts in the study of social psychology is the way outworn ideas and mossback theories continue to control the thinking of many people centuries after they have been proven inadequate and false, and have been wholly rejected by the authorities in the field to which they pertain. The Protestant Reformation substituted an inerrant Scripture for an infallible Pope, and bolstered up the doctrine of the authority of Bible texts with the crude theory of verbal inspiration. As a result, in spite of the fact that the writers of the books of the Bible made no such claim for their sayings as it involves, and in spite of the fact that scholarly research into the actual historical development of biblical literature has completely and forever disposed of it for all informed people, the verbal inspiration dogma nevertheless remains the

very corner stone of fundamentalism. Whoever clings to this absurd theory simply has his eyes blinded to the real relation between modern science and biblical teaching.

To say what many fundamentalists say, that anything more than what the Bible teaches is too much and that anything less is not enough, is to argue as the Caliph Omar argued to justify the burning of the Alexandrian library: for he is said to have held that if the books contained the same doctrines as the Koran they were superfluous, and if they contained doctrines at variance with the Koran, they were pernicious. This is a kind of reasoning exactly equivalent to the argument of the fundamentalist regarding the contents of the Bible. If the verbal inspiration theory forces a fundamentalist to hold that Joshua actually made the sun stand still in order to lengthen the day of battle enough to enable his forces to win the victory, then he simply has to reject the truth of astronomy that the earth is what would have to be made to stand still in order to prolong the day. For the verbal inspiration theory makes the Bible absolutely unerring. What God forced the hand of the author to write must be true even though it flatly contradicts the Copernican-Newtonian theory of the planetary motions! As long as fundamentalists adhere to the verbal inspiration theory of Scripture we may expect them to resist the scientific study of religious literature, and of religious

beliefs and practices. Their tenacious clinging to this obsolete theory is the psychological explanation of their obscurantism, and of their general hostility to the application of the accepted methods and truths of science to the study of religious phenomena.

Summarizing these answers, it is unquestionably true that there is a widespread and a growing tendency among educated religious people to accept the new discoveries in the sciences at their face value, and to apply scientific methods to the study of sacred literature, religious rites, and theological dogmas. This means a definite abandonment of the old verbal inspiration theory of the Bible on which fundamentalism rests, and the interpretation of the stories of creation and other naïve scientific theories of the world found in Scripture as simply the expression of that prescientific period in the evolution of human culture to which the biblical writings belong. But it does not mean the surrender of the belief that man's spiritual life is but a fragment of the spiritual life of the universe. For many contemporary thinkers in fact hold that the very core of reality is a personal God, the Eternal Father, on whom both man and nature are absolutely dependent. This is the *new theism* in modern religious thought. It sympathizes with the fundamentalists in their struggle against the materialistic social philosophy of the meliorists, which delights to call itself social sci-

ence, but it absolutely repudiates the basic principles upon which fundamentalism rests. Hence the new theism is thoroughly modern in its outlook on life.

On the other hand, there is a widespread and a rapidly growing tendency among certain present-day religious thinkers to adopt the main tenets of the social philosophy of meliorism. For these thinkers the important thing about any religion is the social environment, and since our modern industrial civilization is radically different from the social organizations in Palestine out of which the religion of Israel and primitive Christianity emerged, the continuity between modern Christianity and that of New Testament times is treated as essentially a fiction of the conservative theologians. The Christianity of to-day has little or nothing in common with the doctrinal formulations originating out of an antique Jewish social environment, but it should create an entirely new theology out of the social concepts of our own day. This type of theology is inspired by an unfaltering trust in humanity's ability to make a better world. It puts new wine into the old bottles. The most popular concepts of the conservative theology are reinterpreted in terms of the social ideal of the betterment of mankind here on the earth. Adopting the evolutionary social philosophy of the meliorists, these thinkers attempt to interpret it so as to avoid its atheistic implications. This is the new *social*

theology,[5] and it is unquestionably one of the most aggressive thought tendencies of our day. It has practically no sympathy with fundamentalism.

This psychological explanation of the controversy between the fundamentalists and the modernists has thus revealed an entirely new movement within progressive theology—a movement which has already worked itself out to the point where two opposing groups of liberal religious thinkers have to be sharply distinguished. Why is it that these two schools of thought have never been clearly differentiated? What is at least a plausible answer suggests itself.

In any new intellectual tendency the preliminary stage is a separation of the movement as a whole from traditional ways of thinking in the field in question. In this stage neither the advocates of the new views nor the defenders of the old are conscious of the germs of difference latent in the new position. Its creators and champions regard themselves as being at one in opposition to

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[5] The term "social theology" I owe to E. F. Albertsworth (*International Journal of Ethics*, Vol. XXXIV, p. 368 note), who is one of the adherents of this type of modernism. However, he makes the mistake of treating Hocking, Troeltsch and Wobbermin as social theologians, whereas, as is shown in detail in succeeding chapters, they hold quite different views from the thinkers whom Mr. Albertsworth follows. But, subject to this correction, his article, which is entitled "Current Religious Thought and Modern Juristic Movements," is especially significant in that it points out the very close similarity between social theology and the new legal philosophy of Dean Pound.

the traditional outlook, and all bend their energies in defending it against the old. But as soon as such a movement succeeds in establishing itself reasonably well against the traditional doctrines, its leaders begin to recognize the essential differences among themselves. In truth, the conflict with the old views itself develops such differences. Modern progressive theology is now in this second stage in its development. Until quite recently liberal theologians wrote without definitely setting themselves in opposition to one another, but now they are beginning to defend their respective points of view against each other.

The main purpose of this essay is to make a critical analysis of the current literature of religious thought which will bring into clear relief the essential differences between social theology and the new theism. It is hoped that such a discussion may prove helpful to educated people who are interested in religion by lighting the way through the cloud of confusion, which shrouds, like a funeral pall, so much of the literature of modern philosophy of religion.

Chapter II

THEOLOGICAL METHOD

THE importance of method in modern knowledge can hardly be exaggerated. Among thinking people no judgment whatsoever can hope to gain full recognition as valid scientific knowledge to-day which is not reached and controlled by sound methodical principles. Now in any particular field of study two sets of such principles have to be distinguished. In the first place, there are the general rules of procedure which apply to all scientific research. Observation, description, and classification of the observed facts; sustained reflection upon the data thus obtained, culminating in the formulation of general explanatory hypotheses; followed by the careful testing of these tentative hypotheses, which involves making deductions from them and verifying or seeking to verify these deductions by appeal to the facts of experience—these are essential steps in scientific method, or inductive reasoning, and they must be carefully followed if accurate knowledge is to be reached in any field of investigation.[1] But, in the second place, in so far as the various fields of facts

[1] For a fuller account of scientific method see D. S. Robinson: *The Principles of Reasoning,* Part II.

are unique, separate methods have to be devised for the investigation of each. It is a gross mistake to apply special methods, suitable only to a particular set of facts, to an entirely different kind of subject matter. Yet it is a mistake often made by scientists who trespass on fields in which they have not specialized, as when history is reduced to sociology, sociology to psychology, psychology to biology, or biology to chemistry. Frequently the uniqueness in the subject matter of a derivative science is swallowed up in the more general field, due either to a failure to appreciate it or to the lack of special methods.

Theology deals with the facts of religious experience, and hence it is, in part at least, a science. If it is to retain the respect of thinking people it must, just as far as possible, apply the general procedure of all scientific research to these facts—observing, describing, classifying them as carefully as possible, formulating sound general principles of explanation, and testing these explanatory principles by further observation. But it must also devise a special theological method to deal with its unique subject matter or be absorbed by some other branch of human knowledge. Unless a sound theological method can be constructed, and one, moreover, which is entirely consistent with the general methodological principles of science, there is very little hope of placing theology on a par with other branches of human knowledge.

The lack of such a method has done more than anything else to reduce the erstwhile queen of the sciences to a position of ignominy. For whereas only a comparatively little while ago theology was almost universally conceded to be the very acme of human knowledge, to-day it occupies a position among the sciences almost exactly like that of alchemy or astrology. This is undoubtedly chiefly because it has too often been unscientific and dogmatic in its method of reasoning.

For the method of orthodox revealed theology has always been to assume a special revelation for its basic doctrines, and to deduce from these the rest of the system, making the whole body of dogma as consistent as possible with natural knowledge, yet never hesitating to make assertions in direct contradiction to science. The content of revelation is assumed to be a set of doctrinal propositions, which, taken together, form the postulates or axioms of the dogmatic system, known as theology, that is deduced from them. When any one of these basic propositions is questioned the inquirer is referred back to its source, which is either a Church Council, an infallible Pope or an inerrant Scripture.[2] Thus the theologian's busi-

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2 Compare the distinction between the old and the new Protestantism in Ernst Troeltsch's *Protestantism and Progress*, Chap. ii. The author is unquestionably right in holding that the old Protestantism is in spirit and in method quite like Catholicism, whereas the new Protestantism is friendly to modern knowledge.

ness is conceived to be either the interpreting of all of the rest of human knowledge in terms of the received system, or the defense of the faith once for all delivered unto the saints against the encroachments of natural knowledge. To be sure a distinction is frequently made by traditionalists between natural and revealed theology, the task of the former being to prove by reasoning the premises or axioms which have been made known by a miraculous self-revelation of God. But such proofs usually beg the question by assuming the principle to be proven, as when fundamentalists argue that one should believe the Bible because it is the word of God, and that it must be the word of God because its miracles prove it to be of divine origin. But if such proofs do not actually argue in a circle like this, they often end in failure, and the theologian is thus thrown back upon revealed theology for the dogma which he has ignominiously failed to prove by an appeal to reason. For to call in question any of the propositions of that sacred system is to be guilty of heresy.

When a speculative system of ideas, reached by this deductive method of reasoning, was found to be inconsistent with the Scriptures various allegories were invented to effect a reconciliation. Allegorizing is a very ancient and widespread method of adjusting new ideas to sacred writings. Long before the advent of Christianity it was used by the Hebrews and the Greeks. Early

Christian thinkers adapted this method to their purpose and read the new theological doctrines back into the passages of Scripture. For was not the Holy Spirit speaking through the writer of the passage in question, and did he not foreknow the later thought and intend to express it in a figure? By this means theologians accommodated the old thought to the new, abandoning the literal meaning of passages in favor of their own interpretation. Indeed it was partly for the purpose of checking the unbridled use of the allegorical method that Catholic authorities insisted upon the finality of the decisions of Church Councils and of the *ex cathedra* promulgations of the Pope. Although some of them succumbed to its allurements, the early Protestant reformers were not very sympathetic with the method of allegorizing. John Calvin, in particular, vigorously attacked it. But being unable to appeal to ecclesiastical authority or papal infallibility, conservative Protestants insist upon the truth of the original statement in the Scriptures, however contradictory with science it may be. Yet, in spite of all opposition, allegorizing and accommodating have persisted to this day among orthodox thinkers.[3]

Progressive theologians, unafraid of heresy and fully aware of the subtle fallacies of allegorizing,

[3] See Harry Emerson Fosdick: *The Modern Use of the Bible,* Chap. iii, and Albert C. Knudson: *Present Tendencies in Religious Thought,* Chap. ii.

are at one in rejecting the traditional theological methods of reasoning. To them theology is not a purely deductive science as exact as mathematics. Nor is it arbitrary and dogmatic speculation. On the contrary it contains an empirical element and must be developed critically. To avoid being purely speculative like orthodox thinkers, progressive theologians aim to start with the actual data of historical religious experience, and to develop their doctrines under the control and as interpretations of these facts. They abandon as utterly futile the attempt to harmonize the Scriptures with themselves as well as the attempt to reconcile them with modern thought.

To make another approach to the distinction, when orthodox revealed theology is not motivated by the idea of the poet:

> . . . We must silently adore
> Mysterious truths, and not explore,

it is dominated by the old rationalistic and speculative method of reasoning which antedates the logical and epistemological theories of the critical philosophy of Immanuel Kant. But the new point of view, which owes its existence to the Kantian critique of the rational theology in vogue in that day, denies that there is any truth too mysterious to explore, and insists upon the right of the theologian to take a strictly scientific attitude toward the psychological and historical data of religious

development. Progressive theologians all approach their task on the assumption that theology, instead of being given to man ready made by some miraculous revelation, is rather constructed by human intelligence to explain the actual facts of religious experience. In other words, it is a natural growth, just like the other aspects of human culture, and as such it is subject to all the laws of cultural development. Thus progressive theologians, instead of following the conservatives in their condemnation of the idea of evolution as the deadliest enemy of religion, actually apply the theory in explaining the history of religions, and especially in clarifying the growth of Christian doctrine.[4]

Progressive theologians may, therefore, be said to be at one in their opposition to the rationalistic, deductive, accommodating method of orthodox revealed theology; in their insistence that theology is the intellectual interpretation of the actual facts of historical religion; and in their acceptance and application of the idea of evolution to religion and to the theological interpretations of religion. But at that point the agreement ends. For the new theists, recognizing the close relation between theology and philosophy, have developed a method

[4] For an excellent illustration of the way in which a progressive theologian has applied the idea of evolution to religion see G. F. Moore: *History of Religions,* 2 vols. On the difference between the traditional and the modern point of view see R. F. A. Hoernlé: *Matter, Life, Mind and God,* pp. 190*ff.*

which is strictly in line with that used by the father of Protestant theology, Friedrich Schleiermacher, and which has been developed more consequentially by William James. Hence Dr. Wobbermin has rightly designated this method of the new theism the *Schleiermacher-Jamesian Method.* The social theologians, on the other hand, are now engaged in constructing a new method out of the methodological principles of history and social psychology.

The controlling idea in the method of social theology is that of *genetic forces.*[5] These are all of the casual factors in the society out of which the doctrine in question has supposedly evolved, which have operated in any way to produce it. By placing a doctrine in its proper setting in that social order from which it originally emerged, it is believed that the genetic forces which produced it

[5] For the very earliest statement of the genetic method see G. B. Foster: *The Finality of the Christian Religion,* Chap. vii. My account of this method is based upon articles in the *Journal of Religion,* the most important of which are: S. J. Case: "The Historical Study of Religion," Vol. I, pp. 1-18; Shailer Matthews: "The Functional Value of Doctrines of the Atonement," Vol. I, pp. 146-160, and "Theology and Social Psychology," Vol. III, pp. 337-352; and A. Eustace Haydon: "The Method of the Encyclopedia" (referring to Hastings' *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*), Vol. III, pp. 89-95. Inasmuch as no systematic exposition of social theology has as yet appeared, these articles are of the highest value to students of its method. See also Shailer Matthews: *The Gospel and the Modern Man,* Chaps. i, iii, *The Faith of Modernism,* Chap. iv, and his article in *A Guide to the Study of the Christian Religion,* edited by G. B. Smith. Compare S. J. Case: *The Social Origins of Christianity.*

can be isolated. Thus each doctrine is held to be a product of a definite historical community, and the various social factors in that particular group which coöperate in producing doctrines would exemplify the meaning of genetic forces. Generally speaking, however, all religious creeds originate out of the give and take between man and a none too hospitable environment, that is to say, they are the by-products of man's efforts to master, utilize, and create the environment in the satisfaction of his desires and wishes. Thus even though the complexity of genetic forces is admitted, and the attempt to classify them as vital and mental, etc., is made, they really all reduce to one general type—the forces by means of which man masters and creates his environment.

In any given group these genetic forces are all concentrated in a single so-called *social pattern.* Hence this idea also assumes an overwhelming importance in the method of social theology. In the logical sense of the word a social pattern may be said to be a social category. That is to say, it is a logical class or general concept by means of which are organized all the activities of a group struggling with the physical environment. While there may be more than one social pattern in a given society, some one is always dominant. Thus in the early middle ages feudalism was the social pattern. The whole of European life in that period was organized around this particular social

relationship. For example, in relation to others a given person was either a serf, or a knight, or a king. In a society organized around a different social pattern other terms should take the place of these, as is shown by the fact that there is no reality corresponding to any of these three terms in our American social order. In other words social patterns have their day and cease to be. To-day the social pattern of industrialism or bourgeois democracy has taken the place of feudalism. To-morrow the social pattern of internationalism may supersede that of industrialism, but always the real life of the people is organized by social patterns among which one is always dominant in each major group.

The social pattern, however, is more than a merely logical or structural principle of organization in a given society. It includes also the basic moral standards of that group. It is the formal principle by which the ethical evaluations of the group are made, and rigidly determines all individual and group judgments of right and wrong within its sphere. Hence it is at one and the same time both a logical and an ethical category. The moral judgments of the people are all cast in it as a mold, whilst the various social institutions are built with it as a model. And that really means that a social pattern is to be defined as the creative and life-giving principle of the society which is organized by it. Thus in making a new social

order, the social consciousness begins by creating a more adequate social pattern. It follows that the religious conceptions of a social group are invariably and necessarily created by the social pattern dominant in that group. Just as the relations of man to his fellows and to nature are determined by the social pattern, so are his relations to the superhuman power or powers, on whom he believes himself to be dependent, determined by that pattern. Thus in the old feudalistic society of Europe, God was looked upon as an arbitrary king whose honor must be appeased. So in like manner all theological doctrines are generated by some social pattern, and there is a perpetual shifting of doctrinal content as changes in the social order take place. In fact each particular doctrine is regarded as only an analogy or metaphor, the analogue or factual basis of which is the social pattern which created it.

Now it must be especially emphasized that it is the social pattern of the whole social group which creates the creeds of the group and not the special pattern of the religious community within the group. This is not always made clear by social theologians. Sometimes they write as though the ecclesiastical organizations, such as the church councils, produce the doctrines. But when they so write it is apparent, at least to one who reads between the lines, that the councils are only the agents of the creative social pattern as a whole.

For the members of the ecclesiastical council can not do otherwise than formulate their beliefs in terms of the creative social pattern in which they live and move and have their being. Not the religious community, but the whole social order supplies the creative social pattern which generates the theological dogmas characteristic of a given age.

In this respect, so the social theologians argue, theology is different from philosophy. Few greater mistakes in theological reasoning can be made than that of supposing that doctrines are the products of individual philosophers. For doctrines are generated by the social pattern of a given society, whereas philosophical systems are the products of individual thinking. To put it shortly, theological dogmas are produced by groups for groups, whereas philosophical systems are produced by individuals for individuals. The new social theologians charge the new theists with committing the subtle fallacy of confusing theology with philosophical theory, and of taking it for granted that a theologian must necessarily be a philosopher. To trace each theological doctrine to its proper social pattern, and to explain its devious evolution and especially its rapidly shifting meaning, by reference to the various social patterns into which it has been cast in the long course of its history is not only the main task of the theologian, but the basic methodological principle of religious knowledge.

This is the central idea in the method of social theology.

As an illustration of the application of this method, let us consider the various doctrines of the atonement. Social theologians look upon these doctrines primarily as serving the function of justifying, in terms of the actual changing social practices of dealing with wicked people, God's forgiveness of the sinner. For each social order has a different conception of the preconditions of forgiveness, or to use the same terminology adopted above, each has a different social pattern, the moral aspect of which, so far as the doctrine of the atonement is concerned, is constituted by the preconditions of forgiveness. Hence each successive theory of the atonement is an attempt to interpret God's forgiveness of sinners in terms of the practice of forgiving which rule in the social order out of which it arises.

Thus the *sacrificial theory* of the atonement in the New Testament, according to which Christ is our Passover, grew out of the existing practice of offering a sacrifice to expiate sin, which was the social pattern of the Jewish society in which Christianity arose. Then there developed the *ransom theory* which persisted to the twelfth century. According to one form of this theory Satan had seized some of the elect and held them in torment until God gave Jesus to him as a ransom for their release, whereupon Satan was immediately cheated

out of his ransom because the divine power of the Saviour made it impossible for him to be held in the throes of death. Later, under the stress of the new social pattern of feudal society, which in its moral aspect involved the idea that it was wrong to forgive until the injury which had been done to the forgiver's honor had been met, there developed St. Anselm's famous *infinite honor theory.* Jesus' suffering was held to be for the purpose of satisfying God's honor, which being infinite required an infinite satisfaction before he could justly forgive sinners. Then with the rise of the absolute monarchies of Europe, in which the moral aspect of the social pattern was the conception of the necessity of punishment of all violators of the king's will, there arose the theory that Jesus' death was to satisfy the *punitive justice* of God. He was morally free to forgive sinners their misdeeds because his punitive justice had fallen on the divine Saviour. *Grotius' theory* of the atonement developed next, created by the social pattern of a predominantly legal society or constitutional monarchy. It held that Jesus suffered to vindicate God as a lawgiver rather than to satisfy his punitive justice. Then there developed the social order known as *bourgeois* society, the pattern of which was property, and the crucifixion was interpreted as the *debt which God paid to satisfy creditors.* Thus the fundamentalists still sing,

Jesus paid it all,
All to him I owe.
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow.

For it is natural that the older theories should persist even though new ones are continually being formed.

Thus at least six different social orders may be distinguished, each of which had a distinct social pattern creating a special doctrine of the atonement. And doubtless another theory is now in process of developing, based on the social pattern of our own age. This, then, is a clear illustration of the method of social theology, applied to a specific doctrine. What, now, is to be thought of this method?

Such an application of it is sufficient proof of its value and fruitfulness in explaining the origin and growth of Christian doctrine. Nor would any new theist attempt to discredit the method so long as it is restricted to the history of religious thought. In strongly emphasizing the function of social patterns in creating dogmas, in envisaging theological creeds as vital outgrowths of the whole cultural environment of a people, this genetic principle has rejuvenated a study which has too often been little more than a mental juggling of "bloodless categories," or a redefining and rewording of sterile credal statements. Moreover, as an historical method, this method of social theology is simply

the fuller development of the methodological principles which the great biblical scholars of the closing generation have so effectively used in restoring to the world the actual temporal unfolding of the religion of the Hebrews, and of the early Christianity into which Jewish religion so beautifully flowered. He who has experienced the rare privilege of sitting at the feet of such much maligned "higher critics" as Professors George Foote Moore, Benjamin Wisner Bacon, and Arthur Cushman McGiffert, to mention only the greatest, and who with breathless interest, has watched them cut through the antique wrappings in which a long succession of traditionalists have mummied the Bible, surely has no quarrel with the social theologians for generalizing and extending their method so as to make it applicable to the whole history of religion. On the contrary he must and will frankly admit that by so doing they are rendering a conspicuous service in the direction of clarifying religious thought.

Nevertheless, even in the field of history the genetic method of social theology has its decided limitations, an excellent illustration of which may be found in this very doctrine of the atonement. For, cutting across all of the social orders whose patterns and genetic forces produced the special doctrines listed above, there is a central and abiding theory of the atonement. And that is the *moral theory.* It declares the meaning of the

cross of Christ to be the bringing home to the innermost being of men the cardinal Christian truth that the vicarious outpouring of love, supremely exemplified in Jesus' life and death, is the most precious fact in human experience and the clearest revealment of the nature of God. Even though it has at times been overshadowed by crasser and more superstitious fancies, this moral conception of the atonement is the center of the New Testament doctrine of Christ's crucifixion, and it has persisted throughout Christian history. Origen vigorously defended it at the beginning of the third century of our era. In the days of Anselm it was proclaimed by the noble Abelard. Peter the Lombard promulgated it in the words: "The death of Christ justifies us inasmuch as through it charity is stirred up in our hearts." Fra Angelico expressed it in a matchless painting of the crucifixion on the walls of San Marco in which he represented the crucified Jesus as the central figure in a long line of Hebrew prophets and Christian saints and martyrs, all of whom are depicted as sharers in the Lord's work of vicarious atonement.[6]

The crude theories of the atonement created by the social patterns of bygone ages are inconsistent with modern thought, albeit they survive in ortho-

[6] See Hastings Rashdall: *The Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology,* for an authoritative account of the development of this great doctrine.

dox circles. But this moral theory contains an imperishable truth which was never needed more than by people of our own generation. In the words of a recent Harvard Prize Hymn:

> I know not how that Calvary's cross
> A world from sin could free;
> I only know its matchless love
> Has brought God's love to me.

But precisely when it comes to this central kernel of the great doctrine of the atonement the method of social theology breaks down completely. For a theory which persists throughout the entire history of Christian doctrine must transcend the half dozen politico-economic social orders whose patterns produced the various other historical doctrines of the atonement. What social pattern created this moral theory of the atonement? To what actually existing social order did this particular pattern belong?

These highly significant questions suggest the prime defect in the method of social theology. It completely ignores the fact that systematic theology, or philosophy of religion, as distinct from the history of doctrine, is to-day and ever has been more interested in the question of the truth and logical validity of doctrines than in that of their origin and cumulative accretions and agglutinations. And inasmuch as the method of social theology is admitted by its defenders to be a purely

descriptive method it cannot deal at all with this question of validity and truth. It can only faithfully describe what has happened in the long course of doctrinal development. Although this is an absolutely indispensable preliminary task it is by no means the whole task of the theologian. No purely descriptive method has any way of determining the logical superiority of one doctrinal formulation over another. In this connection it is of the greatest significance that the late Dr. Ernst Troeltsch, unquestionably one of the ablest progressive theologians of our day, gradually worked away from a purely descriptive method of dealing with the facts and values of religious development to the method of the new theists. He came to recognize that the "attempt to understand history by reference to 'origins,' be they natural, psychological, or sociological, is not itself enough." [1]

Unwilling to accept the consequences of their

[1] R. S. Sleigh: *The Sufficiency of Christianity and Ernst Troeltsch,* p. 45. "Thus Troeltsch's earlier essentially ideological (*i. e.,* descriptive) standpoint is corrected (*cf.* Bd. II, 677*f.,* 450 note, 727, 313 note). Merely to describe, on the one hand, as we do in first views, is not enough; and, on the other hand, merely to reduce or analyze historical facts into their natural, psychological, and sociological antecedents, or to derive them, both in their content and succession, metaphysically from a universal concept is recognized more clearly to do violence to the vital, concrete, alogical reality of history," p. 43. The reference is to Bd. II of Ernst Troeltsch's *Gesammelte Schriften.* Since G. B. Foster borrowed his statement of theological method from an early work of Troeltsch he may have transmitted the error, to which Sleigh here refers, to those social theologians who came under his influence.

own admission that the genetic method is purely descriptive, the social theologians argue that the particular doctrine which wins in the conflict with its rivals does so because it has a greater functional value. It serves the cultural interests and meets the vital needs of the people constituting the society in which it prevails better than its competitors. This implies a denial of any abiding truth in a creed. For its whole truth is supposed to be constituted out of its utility to some specific social group, struggling to satisfy its human needs. Truth is identified with social utility. Whatever works to the advantage of a group is in so far true. In other words, the truth of a theological doctrine is entirely constituted by its practical consequences. This is the well-known pragmatist or instrumental theory of truth, the fallacies of which have been so completely exposed by logicians that it is rapidly losing ground in philosophy.[8] Yet the social theologians, evidently en-

[8] In a note at the end of an article outlining contemporary European thought in the field of philosophy, Professor A. E. Taylor writes: "It may be thought that something should have been said about the revolt against authority and tradition which has styled itself variously 'Pragmatism' and 'Humanism,' and also about the recent vogue of Bergsonianism. I may in part excuse my silence by the plea that both movements are, in my judgment, already spent forces. If I must say more than this, I would only remark about Pragmatism that I could speak of it with more confidence if its representatives themselves were more agreed as to its precise principles. At present I can discern little agreement among them about anything except that they all show a great impatience with the business of thinking things quietly and

tirely oblivious of these fallacies, have tied their method up with this already dying logical theory, which is only another illustration of the fact that those who scoff most at philosophy in general are usually the ones who are already committed to an uncritical acceptance of some particular philosophy.

This leads back to the basic assumption underlying the method of social theology, namely, that theology is a social product whereas philosophy is the creation of isolated individual thinkers. Is this dogmatic assertion true? By no means. Professor Royce long ago showed conclusively that every great philosophical system is the product of its age and that the philosophical genius of any period is he who can best voice its deepest aspirations, ideals, and insights.

The historical office of the greatest philosophers has always been to reword, as it were, the meaning and the

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steadily out, and that none of them seem to appreciate the importance of the 'critical' problem. 'Pragmatism' thus seems to me less a definite way of thinking than a collective name for a series of 'guesses at truth.' Some of the guesses may be very lucky ones, but I, at least, can hardly take the claims of unmethodic guessing very seriously. To 'give and receive argument' appears to me to be the very essence of Philosophy." *Recent Developments of European Thought,* edited by F. S. Marvin, p. 62. Reprinted with the permission of the Oxford University Press. Outside of pragmatist circles this considered judgment of one of the most eminent living British philosophers, would unquestionably be generally accepted. Compare, for example, Bertrand Russell's article on contemporary philosophy in the *Dial* for October, 1924.

form of the most significant life, temperaments, and instincts of their own age. As man is social, as no man lives alone, as your temperament is simply the sum total of your social "reflex actions," is just your typical bearing towards your fellows, the great philosopher, in reflecting on his own deepest instincts and faiths, inevitably describes, in the terms of his system, the characteristic attitude of his age and people. So, for instance, Plato and Aristotle, taken together, express for us, in their philosophical writings, the essence of the highest Greek faith and life. The Greek love of the beautiful and reverence for the state, the Greek union of intellectual freedom with conventional bondage to the forms of politics and of religion, the whole Greek attitude towards the universe, in so far as the Athens of that age could embody it, are made articulate in enduring form in the speculations of these representative men. They consciously interpret this Hellenic life,—they do also more: they criticize it. Plato especially is in some of his work a fairly destructive analyst of his nation's faith. And yet it is just this faith, incorporated as it was into his own temperament, bred into his every fiber, that he must needs somehow express in his doctrine. And now perhaps you may already see why there is of necessity nothing absolute, nothing final, about much that a Plato himself may have looked upon as absolute and final in his work. Greek life was not all of human life; Greek life was doomed to pass away: Greek instincts and limitations could not be eternal. The crystal heavens that the Greek saw above him were indeed doomed to be rolled up like a scroll, and the elements of his life were certain to pass away in fervent heat. But then, into all nobler future humanity, Greek life was certain to enter, as a factor, as a part of its

civilized instincts, as an ennobling passion in its artistic production, as a moment of its spirituality.[9]

Hence the separation of theology and philosophy in this respect is radically and fundamentally wrong in principle and absolutely impossible in practice. The plain truth is that both theology and philosophy are partly the expressions of the general cultural environment out of which they grow and partly the constructive original creations of master minds. No thinker can possibly detach himself from the particular culture in which he matures. The leading systems of doctrinal theology are shot through and through with philosophy, and conversely there is not a philosophical system in the whole history of philosophy which is not pervaded by a theological attitude. Moreover all such systems, be they theological or philosophical, are genuine expressions of some aspect of the life of the people among whom they originate. Least of all can the social theologians claim that their theology is free from philosophical presuppositions, for, as we have just seen illustrated, the characteristic logical and metaphysical tenets of pragmatism form the background of all their writings. They are probably not always conscious of this fact, but the reader who is at all familiar with this type of thought needs no one to point out its doc-

[9] Josiah Royce: *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy,* pp. 8*f.* Reprinted with the permission of Houghton Mifflin Co.

trines in the literature of social theology. Indeed the whole theological terminology of this school of writers is well-nigh incomprehensible apart from a knowledge of evolutionary naturalism and pragmatism.

Another serious defect in the method of social theology is that it throws the emphasis upon the social pattern of the whole social group instead of on that of the religious community. Doubtless, religious people do use the ideas and moral standards current in their cultural surroundings, both in interpreting their private religious experiences and in communicating their conceptions and feelings to one another. And doubtless the religious group as a whole is considerably influenced by being immersed in a wider politico-economic order. Yet, in spite of the multifarious influences of the whole society on the religious group, there can be no question but what there is a uniqueness about a religious community which is operative in the production of doctrines to a far greater extent than are the genetic forces of the wider social order. To deny this would be like arguing that a whale must be like an octopus because they both live in the sea. This uniqueness in the religious community must be laid hold of and emphasized as one of the most significant of the genetic forces which bring doctrines into being. For if this uniqueness is not constantly kept in mind and strongly emphasized, religion will become completely secularized

and absorbed into other cultural activities such as art, morality, politics, and science, and there is ample evidence in their writings that this is really the goal toward which the more radical of the social theologians are tending.

Consequently the most fruitful way of classifying genetic forces would not be that suggested by social theologians, according to which the main division would be between vital needs and mental needs, but it would be that suggested by Troeltsch which emphasizes the distinction between those patterns belonging to the social order as a whole and those belonging to religious sects as specifically different types of social organization than politico-economic orders. For example, the Roman Catholic hierarchy is itself a social order of extremely wide geographical and temporal range and with an enormous influence, and a comprehension of its unique social pattern is undoubtedly far more significant for a sympathetic understanding of Catholic dogma than is a knowledge of the politico-economic social order in which it is to-day situated. Once the conception of a specifically Christian consciousness, continuous through the ages, is grasped as the essential causal factor in the growth and differentiation of Christian doctrines, the durability and persistence of the great creeds of Christendom may be understood. The moral theory of the atonement, for example, which the social theologians

are unable to explain by the social pattern of any particular social order, is explicable as the product of the continuous Christian consciousness, and we shall deal with it later from that point of view.

Then, too, there is a special danger in overlooking this fundamental distinction between the religious community and the secular social order in which it is situated, and it is one to which the more radical of the social theologians appear to have succumbed, and that is the danger of identifying the content of a religious doctrine with that particular pattern of the wider social order which is supposed to have produced it. When one begins to emphasize the relativity of the content of a doctrine to the pattern of a specific social order, and to look upon theological concepts as mere analogies based upon a definite analogue in an actual politico-economic temporal order, he is not far from the thought that after all these concepts have no other content than these shifting social relations which are used to interpret them. And that implies a dogmatic denial of the reality of the ideal content of such concepts. Now let us turn to the method of the new theism.

Dr. Georg Wobbermin has used two interesting descriptive phrases to designate this method, and an explanation of these phrases will serve very well to exhibit its essential features. These names are: (1) *The religio-psychological method* and

(2) *the Schleiermacher-Jamesian Method.*[10] By the latter he intends to emphasize the fact that the method really goes back, through William James, to the founder of progressive Protestant theology, Friedrich Schleiermacher.

Dr. Wobbermin argues that Schleiermacher is the Copernicus of theology just as Kant is the Copernicus of philosophy. For just as Copernicus turned men's attention away from the earth to the sun as the center of the solar system, and just as Kant turned attention away from the object of knowledge to the subject of knowledge and to the inner mental factors which make knowledge possible, so Schleiermacher turned men's attention away from a purely speculative and one-sidedly rationalistic interpretation of God and the divine things to an interpretation based upon an analysis of actual religious experience. In carrying forward the development of progressive theology Al-

[10] Although there is a rather extensive literature dealing with the method of the new theism, the following exposition is based primarily upon the discussions of Dr. Georg Wobbermin, Professor of Theology in the University of Göttingen, who has for several years occupied himself chiefly with the problem of theological method. His two most important contributions to the subject are *Die religionspsychologische Methode in Religionswissenschaft und Theologie,* which is volume one of his *Systematische Theologie,* and *Methoden der religionspsychologischen Arbeit,* which was originally published in the collective work entitled *Methoden-Werk* edited by Emil Abderhalden, but which is now obtainable in separate form (Urban and Swarzenberg, Berlin). An excellent summary of his method will be found in the opening chapter of *Das Wesen der Religion.*

brecht Ritschl went too far in setting theological method in opposition both to science and to metaphysics. To-day his famous theory that the "value-judgments" of religion are entirely different in logical structure from the "existential judgments" of science is not acceptable. Hence Wobbermin's motto for contemporary systematic theology is: "*Back to Schleiermacher, and from Schleiermacher forward through William James.*" This he rightly regards as the most hopeful procedure for the genuinely progressive theologian, inasmuch as the development of theology during the last century proves this to have been the main current of liberal religious thought. And it should be especially noted that the late Dr. Ernst Troeltsch was in agreement with Wobbermin here.[11]

As was just indicated, the characteristic feature of Schleiermacher's theological method is a rigid insistence upon the basic insight of Martin Luther that religion is essentially an inner personal experience. Thus, in his very earliest work, the *Addresses on Religion,* he wrote: "Religion is of such a sort and is so rare that whoever utters anything about it, must necessarily have had it, for

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[11] See R. S. Sleigh: *The Sufficiency of Christianity and Ernst Troeltsch,* Chap. ii, for an excellent account of Troeltsch's method, criticism of Ritschl, and estimate of Schleiermacher. Compare Troeltsch's articles, "Contingency" and "Historiography," in Hastings' *Encylopedia of Religion and Ethics* and his *Christian Thought.*

nowhere could he have heard it. To the man who has not himself experienced it, it would only be an annoyance and a folly." To which may be added the fine passage which Wobbermin has selected as a foreword to his *Das Wesen der Religion*: "That religion necessarily springs up of itself out of the inner experience of every good soul, that it possesses a province of its own within the human heart, a province of which it is absolute master, that it is worthy because of its hidden energy to move the noblest and most perfect human beings and to be known by them in its inmost essence, this it is that I affirm." Hence it is not an exaggeration when Professor J. A. Leighton writes: "Schleiermacher's exposition of the originality and uniqueness of the religious life in man and his doctrine of immediate self-consciousness or the *feeling of unity* as the source of religion in the individual are the most important contributions toward a philosophy of religion that have been made in modern times." [12]

Significant, indeed, is the fact that William James adopted precisely the same point of view as Schleiermacher. After definitely excluding "second-hand religion," based upon mere imitation and conformity to tradition, he writes: "We must make search rather for the original experiences which were the pattern-setters to all this mass of

[12] J. A. Leighton: *Typical Modern Conceptions of God*, p. 97. Compare Albert C. Knudson: *Present Tendencies in Religious Thought*, pp. 154*ff.*, and A. C. McGiffert: *The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas*, Chap. v.

feeling and imitated conduct." [13] And in all of his psychological investigations of the nature of religious experience, James faithfully followed the method of studying typical examples of deeply religious people. And again, this was precisely the view of Troeltsch: "It is," he writes, "one of the clearest results of all history of religion and all psychology of religion that the essential thing in every religion is not dogma or idea, but worship and fellowship, living communion with God." [14]

In this country this method has been consistently developed and applied, especially by Professors W. E. Hocking and J. B. Pratt. In England it is sponsored by Professors George Galloway, Clement C. J. Webb, William Fulton and others. In fact it is endorsed by liberal Protestant theologians of all countries. But while the theological method of the new theism deliberately aims to be and is based upon the Schleiermacher-Jamesian viewpoint, it will be shown later that this does not entail a neglect of the social aspects of religion.

The other phrase used by Wobbermin also intends to emphasize the necessity of beginning with inner, personal religious experience by the word psychological. The expression "the religio-psy-

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[13] William James: *The Varieties of Religious Experience,* p. 6.

[14] Quoted by Knudson, *op. cit.,* p. 231. Compare Ernst Troeltsch: *Protestantism and Progress,* Chap. vi, especially pp. 191*ff.*, and his essay in memory of James in the *Harvard Theological Review,* 1912.

chological method" could be translated "the method of psychology and comparative religion." Hence the new theists' method might be thought to be simply a combination of the method of empirical psychology with that of comparative religion, including the history of religion, just as the social theologians' method is a combination of the methods of social psychology and history. But Wobbermin explicitly asserts that his method is not the purely descriptive method of empirical psychology in that it definitely seeks to validate the claim of the religious experience to a unique insight into the nature of the universe. In other words, he uses the term psychological to indicate that the theologian ought always to begin with the actual facts of religious experience, but he distinguishes within these facts the content from the claim to truth aspect, the purely existential or psychological aspect from the formal or logical aspect. The purely descriptive science of psychology is concerned only with the former but systematic theology must take account of both. This means that the new theists are fully aware of the inadequacy of a descriptive method, deliberately ally themselves with metaphysics and incorporate in their method a logical criterion.

Moreover, Wobbermin's use of the word *religio* in conjunction with the word psychological shows that the new theists recognize the importance of taking account of every known religion. And

they would especially emphasize the stages in their evolution as well as their present form. They welcome all of the light that can possibly be thrown on the Christian religion by the study of other historic religions, both in their origin and growth. And they expressly emphasize as a methodological principle the necessity of taking all religions, dead and living, both as they are or were in their final form and in their growth, into careful consideration. This is really the only way to appreciate the deep significance of religion in the lives of men. Yet it must certainly be conceded that no one can understand an alien religion except as he uses such knowledge of religion as he has gained from participating in the experience of his own religious community.

Two other expressions are used by Wobbermin to characterize more adequately the method of the new theism, namely, the *religio-psychological circle* (*religionspsychologische Zirkel*), and *creative empathy* (*productive Einfühlung*). By the former he means that the theologian's own experience, when he is engaged in formulating his doctrines, comprises a wide circle constituted, first, by his intimate knowledge of the religious life of the community out of which his own inner devotions grew, and second, by his knowledge of the data he can gather of the religious experience of other devout people who belong to entirely different communities. By *creative empathy* he means that the

investigator must gradually and progressively feel his way into the inner essence of a doctrine by a careful study of the way in which it expresses his own experience, and by a comparison of these findings with the reports he has from adherents of alien religions. This laborious process will enable the theologian to separate the wheat from the chaff in credal statements and to formulate a scientific theology.

Returning, now, to the doctrine of the atonement, Mr. Fosdick's discussion of it is suggestive of the way in which this method of the new theism can be applied in searching for the kernel of truth in one of the greatest doctrines of the Christian religion. He refers to typical examples of vicarious sacrifice in modern life—"Livingstone voluntarily assuming the burden of Africa's misery," "Father Damien becoming a leper to the lepers when he need not have done it," "Florence Nightingale taking on herself the tragedy of battlefields which she never had caused." By such examples he shows that vicarious sacrifice is of deep and vital significance in human experience. "Gravitation is no more deeply built into the structure of the physical universe than is vicarious sacrifice into the essential nature of the moral world." And then he generalizes it into a universal law. "Save when some one who need not do it voluntarily assumes the burden of man's misery and sin, there is no salvation from any want or tragedy that man-

kind knows." Now the Master's cross is best interpreted as a supreme and "uniquely significant" example of the working of this law in human experience. "*Jesus has supplied an object of loyalty for the noblest devotions of the generations since he came.*" His death is an embodiment of the divine purpose in a form in which men can adore it. "All through the universe the pervading purpose of God runs like blood through our bodies, but there must be at least one place where men can put their fingers upon it and feel its pulse. Just that service Jesus has rendered men. He has been to them the place where they could feel the divine heart-beat; he has been the one in whom the eternal purpose came to the surface where they could be sure of it." Note in all of this how Mr. Fosdick has proceeded from the facts of vicarious sacrifice as they are known to us in our modern experience, to its significance in the moral and spiritual world, to the deep symbolic meaning of the death of Christ as a concrete embodiment of this meaning in a way that all men can grasp. Thus he succeeds in stating the doctrine of the atonement so that it expresses our inner intuitive appreciation of the inestimable value of vicarious sacrifice. Nor is there any mistaking the fact that his formulation of the doctrine is simply a modernization of the moral theory to which we referred above as having persisted through the ages of Christian history.

From this exalted insight into the real religious

significance of vicarious sacrifice, consider especially how Mr. Fosdick is able freely to admit all that the social theologians say about different social patterns producing distinct doctrines of the atonement, and how easily he can brush aside these transitory forms as inconsistent with modern knowledge:

> The Cross of Christ, like every other abiding element in man's life, has passed through interpretation and reinterpretation as the thought of it has been poured from one generation's mental receptacles into another's. It has been run into thought-forms associated with old animal sacrifices; it has been made a "pious fraud" played by God upon the devil, who was promised Christ if he would give up man and who ultimately lost both; it has been poured into the mold of the feudal system by Anselm and into the mold of later European law by Grotius. Yet, warped and distorted out of its vital significance, as it has often been, by categories that had no relation with its original meaning and were essentially unfitted to represent its deepest truth, the Cross of Christ has been the most subduing, impressive and significant fact in the spiritual history of man.[15]

Is this not a sufficient indication of the way in which the method of reasoning of the new theism can be used in reaching the kernel of truth for modern men in a Christian doctrine? And is it not

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[15] Harry Emerson Fosdick: *The Modern Use of the Bible*, pp 229-233. Reprinted with the permission of The Macmillan Company.

obvious from this single illustration that the new theists' method is at least an indispensable supplement to the genetic method of social theology?

However that may be, it certainly proves that the new theists are not, as some of the social theologians seem to think, without a method with which to study the facts of religion. Wobbermin has accurately described the actual procedure which all the new theists use in reaching their formulations of Christian thought. That this is as wide as the poles from the method of orthodox revealed theology, with its exclusiveness, dogmatism, arrogance, and intolerance, should be obvious to any one. To summarize it again, it is the method of starting from the observation of religious experience in the depths of one's own consciousness and of continually checking the results with those gleaned from a careful study of the piety of others, both within your own religious community and from other ages and climes, until you have worked your way into the innermost essence of religion and have fully traced out the system of implications embedded in it. Out of this kind of an insight, reached after years of painstaking and laborious research, the literature of the new theism has been born. Yet a social theologian has branded some of this literature as "curiously medieval in spirit and method."

Why do the social theologians refuse to recognize the method of the new theism as modern?

Why do they insist that it is essentially the same as the method used by the Catholic theologians of the Middle Ages? It is because the new theists refuse to break entirely with the past, preferring, rather, an anchorage in the liberal thought of the past. For the social theologians treat Schleiermacher as though he were in spirit and in method an orthodox theologian of the traditional type. They do not recognize his right to the title of founder of progressive theology. And they look upon it as an aberration in James that he should have ignored the social background of religious experience. According to them, only within the last few years has our knowledge of sociology, history, and social psychology developed to the point where a scientific method of studying religion can be formulated. Any method which deliberately ties itself up with the line of thought initiated by Schleiermacher must ignore the new scientific methods which have been developed in the social sciences. The new theist method does this, and consequently the social theologians honestly believe it to be curiously medieval. What is to be thought of this attitude?

No new theist would deny that there are new developments in the social sciences nor would he intentionally ignore them. Every one recognizes that James overemphasized the individual side of religion, a mistake which was not made either by Schleiermacher or by Albrecht Ritschl, who carried

on Schleiermacher's work. In fact, they were the first to stress the social idea in Christianity. Both Wobbermin and Troeltsch have corrected James on this point.[16] And Hocking, one of James's most distinguished pupils, has also corrected him. In his *The Meaning of God in Human Experience* he does full justice to the social side of religion, even using the social consciousness as the basic proof for the reality of God. This is the meaning of God in human experience, that He makes possible a knowledge of other minds. And Professor Pratt's *The Religious Consciousness* surely goes the full limit in recognizing the fact that the experience of the "Determiner of Destiny" comes to the individual out of his social consciousness, in fact advocating the sound view that it is a product of both the social consciousness and self-consciousness.[17] Yet one of the social theologians has referred to this very book as having been written from a standpoint which was "formulated before the development of recent important conceptions of social psychology in this field!" [18]

The implications of this assertion must be emphatically denied. Again we must insist that the new theists have corrected the one-sidedly indi-

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[16] See Georg Wobbermin: *Systematische Theologie,* Bd. I, 275-293, and Ernst Troeltsch's article in the *Harvard Theological Review,* 1912.

[17] See the chapter entitled "The Religion of Childhood."

[18] Edward Scribner Ames in the *Journal of Religion,* Vol. I, p. 265.

vidualistic attitude of James, and that they are taking account of new developments, not only in the social sciences, but in the natural sciences as well. They all frankly admit that every human being is so deeply rooted in his social environment that he may be said to live, move, and have his being in it. They know perfectly well that if it were possible completely to separate a man from society, which it is not, never has been and never will be, he would be as though he were nothing. And they are as friendly to science as liberal, highly educated modern men can possibly be. When they advocate studying religion in its expression in the inner personal life of the individual the new theists are by no means blind to the fact that this is itself continuous with a wider social reality. Moreover, as has already been made clear, Wobbermin has devoted a lifetime to perfecting and developing the method implicit in Schleiermacher and James, until it stands to-day the most fully developed method of studying religious phenomena in existence.

In cutting themselves loose from any connection whatsoever with the Schleiermacher-Jamesian movement in progressive theology do not the social theologians demonstrate that their own views represent a tangential development apart from the main current of liberal religious thought? For, as Royce has clearly shown,[19] one of the main

[19] See Josiah Royce: *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy*, Preface and Chap. vi.

sources of the idea of evolution is to be found in the German Romantic Movement. Indeed it was within the circles of this movement that human culture, as distinct from physico-chemical entities, first came to be looked upon as a developing process. Moreover this movement actually produced the modern science of history, which, as everybody knows is and has always been the tap root of social science. Schleiermacher was, so to speak, the religious member of the romantic school. That is to say, he applied the ideas of the school to religion. And when the enthusiasm for culture of the other romanticists fizzled into an effervescent sentimentalism, he carried on and produced his *Glaubenslehre*, the first great system of modern progressive theology. Hence he is the real founder of the liberal type of theology as distinct from the purely dogmatic type represented by Scholasticism and Orthodox Protestantism. The new theists definitely recognize that their thinking is a further development of this original liberal movement. They do not want to cut themselves loose from the progressive tendency in religious philosophy which has been evolving during the last hundred years. They repudiate the attempt of the social theologians to build an entirely new theology, which completely abandons, on the ground that it is medieval in spirit and in method, some of the best thought that has been done in this field during the past century.

Chapter III

SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

IT is now sufficiently obvious that the central emphasis in social theology is on social philosophy. For we have seen not only that its method is practically only an adaptation of the genetic method of social psychology, but that the very content of its doctrines is largely influenced, if not primarily determined, by the social theory of the meliorists. We are thus logically brought to a consideration of the basic similarities and differences between the social philosophy of social theology and that of the new theism. And in order to clear the way for such a discussion it is first of all necessary to distinguish a social philosophy from a social program.

A social philosophy is constituted by purely theoretical doctrines as to the nature of human society and by general ethical principles of evaluation. In other words, it attempts to answer such questions as: What is human society? What is meant by human welfare, or the general good, or the greatest happiness of the greatest number? What are the basic principles of organization upon which an ethically justifiable social order may be

based? It was with such profound questions that Plato dealt in the *Republic*, and the answers he there gave practically constitute what might be called the Platonic social philosophy. But on the other hand, a social program is constituted by the practical and specific suggestions which any individual or group may make for the reformation or reconstruction of a given social order. Thus many people to-day believe that the twelve-hour day for common laborers should be eliminated from our social order, and the attempt to put this belief into practice is a social program, or, at least, a part of one. Again the theory that the so-called family wage principle is more equitable under modern conditions than the existing individual wage principle, together with the efforts which are being made in Germany, France and elsewhere to put it into practice, may be regarded as a part of a social program.

It is not at all infrequent for a practical program for social reconstruction to be reached from exactly opposite social philosophies, or at least to be approved and aided by men holding widely different social philosophies. For example, both Plato and the early disciples of Jesus taught communism, but Plato did not advocate it, as did the apostles, because of a belief that the imminent destruction of earthly society made the holding of property by the individual no longer necessary. So to-day, although they hold entirely different

social philosophies, both the social theologians and the new theists may and frequently do join hands in warring against specific abuses in society, and in attempting to establish such practical principles as the eight-hour day, the family wage, prohibition, the outlawing of war, Christian union, and other constructive social changes. It is, therefore, highly important to emphasize the fact that in rejecting the social philosophy of the social theologians the new theists are not necessarily committed to rejecting any of their specific practical suggestions for improving the existing social order. Social philosophy is concerned primarily with general theory, whereas a social program is specific and wholly practical. We are here dealing with the social philosophy and not with the social program of each of the two types of progressive theology.[1]

As was just suggested, any social philosophy really divides itself naturally into two main divisions. On the one hand, it is a doctrine of the general nature of society, answering the question: What is human society? And on the other hand, it is a doctrine as to the value of society. Or, to express it more accurately, it consists of that the-

[1] See Albert C. Knudson: *Present Tendencies in Religious Thought,* pp. 283-302, for a similar distinction between the social program and the social theory of the "Social Gospel." The distinction is of the utmost significance, since the former is entirely compatible with theism, whereas the latter absolutely nullifies it.

ory of value and of those basic ethical principles by which the goodness of a social order (or the betterness, if more than one social order is in question, as is usually the case in theorizing on such matters) is to be critically estimated. It is on this last point that the difference between the social theologians and the new theists is most pronounced, so far as social philosophy is concerned. But first let us consider their answers to the question: What is society?

The social theologians like to think that they are the only advocates among religionists of a dynamic and organic theory of society. Thoroughgoing evolutionists as they are, they abhor a static social order. They definitely repudiate, in religious as well as in political and economic matters, every form of the famous doctrine of laissez faire. They scathingly condemn all hidebound conservatives who think that society and its institutions, being the direct handiwork of God, are altogether too sacred to be changed.[2] Over against this all too prevalent, ultra-conservative point of view, they vigorously advocate the theory that the whole of human society is an evolutionary process which is moving onward toward an ever higher develop-

[2] It should be remembered that, however conservative he was in theology, the late Mr. Bryan by no means believed in leaving social abuses alone. On the contrary, from the beginning to the end of his spectacular career he fearlessly and vigorously denounced the "sins of society" and worked for social melioration.

ment. Every one of its institutions necessarily changes as it progresses and religion must not hold itself away from the surging current. For if it does, inevitably it will speedily be hurled into the sluggish backwaters of the stream of civilization, where, indeed, many radicals think it is already moored. Humanity is in the making. The only way in which wide-awake modern men can illumine their little insignificant day and glorify their earthly existence is by intelligently coöperating in the meliorizing process. This dynamic, organic, evolutionary theory of human society is one of the chief corner stones of social theology.

Generally speaking, the social theologians are undoubtedly right in holding to a developmental theory of society. Their only mistake here is in thinking that they have a monopoly on it, and that whoever holds to the idea that society is in process of becoming is by that very fact committed to the rest of their social philosophy *in toto*. For when stated in this very general way, and apart from a specific interpretation of what melioration means, the new theists are just as ardent advocates of a dynamic theory as are the social theologians.[3] No member of the new theist group would for a moment question the fruitfulness and, for modern

[3] M. P. Follett's original contributions to the organic theory of society entitled *The New State* and *Creative Experience*, owe more to new theists such as Royce, Hocking and Mrs. R. C. Cabot than to any one else, as is acknowledged in the preface of the former work.

men, the necessity of conceiving of human society in terms of the idea or category of evolution. They all recognize that the laws of growth apply to the social order as a whole, and to its various institutions, just as they apply to every other living part of the natural world. Indeed this has become almost a truism for well-nigh all educated people to-day. The facts about humanity which have been brought to light by the sciences of anthropology, ethnology, and sociology have recently become so widely disseminated that no well-informed person can be wholly ignorant of the devious panorama of social evolution. Thanks to these facts the organic, evolutionary theory of society is well founded to-day, and none of the new theists would think of ignoring or in any way minimizing this basic truth. For they well know that any social philosophy which leaves this truth out of consideration stands condemned as obsolete.

Another doctrine in the social philosophy of the social theologians is the idea that society is an over-individual, super-intelligence. They refer to it as the social consciousness, and they invariably think of it as having comparatively recently become a self-conscious mind. In the long and checkered career of its unfolding, the evolutionary process, which is the very essence of nature, has finally culminated in a social order conscious of its substantial unity and inner solidarity. The individual mind has always been a mere abstrac-

tion. The real mind is that of the social whole and it is in the making. James Harvey Robinson's famous book, *The Mind in the Making*, has made this theory the watch-cry of the meliorists, and the social theologians are in full sympathy with his idea that human society is in fact an over-individual, super-intelligent mind, the content of which is being made more full and complete as the cultural values of civilization are gradually augmented and more widely disseminated. The mind of society transcends the mind of its members. This monster engulfing mind is the real master mind. The little fragmentary minds of individuals are all *solidaire* with it or coalesce in it. Subtract from the universe the human social consciousness and the life blood of individual minds is drawn. Society lives. Yes, but it also thinks and feels, desires and wills. It is an organism. Yes, but more than that, it is a super-intelligent mind.

When properly interpreted, the new theist need not balk at this doctrine. In fact, many theists are on record as advocates of the reality of group or institutional minds. They hold that it is philosophically sound to look upon a nation, an educational institution, a business corporation, a church, or any other social institution as having a peculiar mind of its own, not only over and above the minds of its several members, but constituted by their interpenetration. Nor have theists any objection whatever to treating the

whole of humanity as an identity with a unique and developing mind of its own. When the Protestant Reformation became an historic reality the social consciousness of humanity certainly received a new birth of spiritual freedom. And when Shakespeare's superb dramas and Milton's sublime poems were added to the store of human culture, the mind of humanity can be said to have grown in spiritual stature and literally to have been made over. Mr. Robinson is right. The mind of man is in the making and has been in the making through the ages. This the new theists can and do accept as a basic truth of social philosophy just as whole-heartedly as do the social theologians.

The latter, however, go one step further in answering the question: What is human society? Not only is it an organism and a self-conscious, super-intelligent mind, it is also a creative force, and ultimately the only intelligent creative force in the universe. At least this is the view of the more aggressive members of the school. They deny that society is in any sense a derivative or dependent reality, or that it is transcended by a reality of a still higher order. For them the human social consciousness is the only ultimate and absolute reality. It is this human social consciousness which has made us, and not we ourselves. Indeed, not only did it make us, it even made nature. For how else is the following statement of Professor

Edward Scribner Ames, one of the ablest of the social theologians, to be interpreted? "Another misapprehension with reference to the social appears in the conception of its relation to the cosmos or nature. Durkeim and Cornford have shown that the cosmos is socially determined. . . . The picture of a Deity fashioning the world and all that in them is, is so vivid that few realize that it has little, if any, place in a genuinely scientific view of the world." [4] The human social consciousness, child of cosmic evolution as it admittedly is, nevertheless determines the earth and the starry firmament on high, the whole cosmos. This is the third doctrine in the social philosophy of social theology, so far as it pertains to the question of the nature of society. The social consciousness is not only a living organism and a super-intelligent mind, it is God and the only God, very God of very God.

It goes without saying that the new theists part company with those social theologians who subscribe to the theory that human society is the only God. Not that they deny the creative power of the human social consciousness, but they insist that this creativeness is continuous with that of a transcendent God. Moreover it would lose its effectiveness if that continuity were severed. But

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[4] *Journal of Religion,* Vol. I, p. 268. The mentioning of Durkeim and Cornford is significant as indicating one of the chief sources of social theology.

since this really involves us in the problem of how best to conceive of God and of his relation to the world, especially to human society, it will be better to postpone so fundamental an issue for special consideration in a separate chapter. Now let us develop the difference between the social theologians and the new theists with regard to the question of the ethical principles used in evaluating society.

The ethical aspect of the social philosophy of social theology may best be approached through a brief sketch of its history. For in spite of the fact that it pretends to be a wholly new doctrine, it is in reality an old view with a new nomenclature, or, more exactly, it is the modernized form and the most recent development of utilitarianism, or hedonism, as applied to religion. Perhaps the best name for it would be *theological utilitarianism.*

The beginnings of this type of ethical theory go back to Archdeacon Paley and Abraham Tucker, near the end of the eighteenth century. The former's famous definition of virtue is "the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness." [5]

This means that each individual is moral in so far as he works for the general happiness here on earth for the sake of a future endless life of pleasure, guaranteed to him by an omnipotent God.

[5] See Selby-Bigge: *The British Moralists*, Vol. II, p. 357.

The end of morality is the general good, the motive is personal pleasure to be received in the hereafter. He who strives for this end from this motive is virtuous because he is actuated by the "single internal purpose of pleasing God." God gives pleasure in and through eternity to those who please Him in time. This is the egoistic type of theological utilitarianism. While it emphasizes doing good to others it is really dominated by the ulterior motive of finding personal pleasure.

Ignoring the future life and leaving out God, because they were agnostics interested only in the here and now, Jeremy Bentham and James Mill developed this egoistic utilitarianism into scientific ethics, the main principles of which were the associational psychology and the "hedonic calculus," [6] and through them it passed to John Stuart Mill, the greatest of the utilitarians, and one of the originators of a new interpretation. For it was under the influence of John Stuart Mill, Saint-Simon, and Auguste Comte that utilitarianism became wholly altruistic. Indeed, Comte coined the term *altruism* as a name for his ethical theory. Paley's omnipotent God and endless future happiness are dropped. Morality becomes simply a matter of "living for others." It is in a

[6] By the "hedonic calculus" is meant Bentham's famous attempt to measure mathematically the amount of pleasure in a given experience. To him, given the same quantity of pleasure in each, "pushpin is as good as poetry." See Selby-Bigge, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 356.

social order in which all men so live that "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" is to be found. Comte, the founder of sociology as a separate science, conceived of humanity as a growing organism in which individuals live and move and have their being, and identified the service of humanity by the individual not only with morality but also with religion. His famous "Religion of Humanity" is precisely this devotion of men to the welfare of the whole social organism. Thus altruistic utilitarianism gradually supplanted the egoistic utilitarianism of Paley and Bentham.

The real advance of the Comtian view over that of the older type of theory has been well expressed by Sidgwick:

> In the utilitarianism of Paley and Bentham the proper rules of conduct, moral and legal, are determined by comparing the imaginary consequences of different modes of regulation on men and women, conceived as specimens of a substantially uniform and unchanging type. . . . But in the Comtian conception of social science, of which ethics and politics are the practical application, the knowledge of the laws of the evolution of society is of fundamental and continually increasing importance; humanity is regarded as having passed through a series of stages, in each of which a somewhat different set of laws and institutions, customs and habits, is normal and appropriate.

And he justly adds that this way of accounting for the specific differences in the moral codes and

customs of the different peoples "extends far beyond the limits of Comte's special school or sect, and, indeed, seems to be very widely accepted among educated people at the present day," [7] a statement which holds good to-day to an even greater extent than it did when he wrote nearly forty years ago. In other words, altruistic utilitarianism has no monopoly on the idea of social evolution.

The fusion of the utilitarianism of the Comte-Mill type with the *evolutional ethics*, which grew out of the biological discoveries of Darwin and was most consequentially developed by Herbert Spencer, led to a still further modification of the social ethics whose history is here being sketched. Such ideas as "the preservation of human society" and "the increase of the total quantum of human satisfaction" supplanted the idea of a "balance of pleasure over pain" as the utilitarian end of morality and ideal of society. And along with this shift in the conception of the end of life went the attempt to deduce morality from the laws of biology and sociology. As Sidgwick has said, this is what is meant by "establishing morality on a scientific basis," a claim which is still made by advocates of this type of theory.

The modern form of evolutionary utilitarianism is known as meliorism, a very brief statement of which was given in Chapter I. This contemporary

[7] Henry Sidgwick: *History of Ethics*, pp. 257*f*.

thought-tendency is simply the logical culmination of the line of thought whose history has just been sketched. Now the ethical teachings of the social theologians is part and parcel of this general ethical movement. They are constituted out of the Comtian conception of a religion of humanity, and the socio-biological conceptions of preserving human society and increasing the total quantum of human satisfaction. The ethics of social theology simply replaces the egoistic theological utilitarianism of Paley with an altruistic theological utilitarianism. Hence, although in many respects the polar opposite, it is the latest stage in the development of that theological ethic of which Paley's was the first stage. But the only way in which it can be understood is through an analysis of meliorism, and to that difficult task we must now turn.[8]

The greatest defect in the evolutionary utilitarianism, the development of which has just been sketched, is that it attempted to theorize on the meaning of social well-being without first reaching a clear answer to the all-important and profound question: What is value? Now in basing their social ethics on the foundation laid by such men as Mill, Comte, and Spencer the meliorists are

[8] See my article in the January, 1924, number of the *International Journal of Ethics*, Vol. XXXIV, entitled "A Critique of Meliorism," from which some of the paragraphs which follow are taken, with the permission of the editor, Professor James H. Tufts.

equally as blind to the importance of this question as were these, their predecessors, who wrote before the rise of modern theory of value. Hence, partly because they are simply carrying on the utilitarian tradition, and partly because of their utter impatience with and their deep-seated dislike for metaphysical speculation, their writings show very little knowledge of the extensive literature embodying the highly significant and technical investigations which have been made in this field during the three or four decades which have elapsed since the movement was initiated. This means that the meliorists have not reached a unique and unequivocal theory as to what value really is. One has to read between the lines and seek for the background of their expressed ideas in order to discover just what they mean by value. And then one finds that they really do not know what they mean. For they operate with two entirely distinct theories of value without fully comprehending the implications of either, and without satisfactorily amalgamating and reconciling them into a third theory. One of these is the realistic, commonly called the *relational theory*, and the other is the Platonic or *harmony theory* of value.

In this country the relational theory is sponsored and has been most consequentially developed by a group of philosophers known as the new realists. The meliorists have taken it over from them. According to this theory, value is a rela-

tion between a desire on the one hand and something which satisfies that desire on the other hand. When one speaks of the object which satisfies as the value, he has lapsed into popular speech and is not scientifically accurate. The value is not the object, but the object as standing in the relation of satisfying to some desire. When the object, whatsoever it may be, is out of that relation the value disappears. Hence all values are relative. They endure only for the length of time that a desire stands in the relation of being satisfied by an object. Take the satisfying relationship away and you destroy the value. Thwart a desire before it gets satisfied and you have negative value. According to this view the rôle of intelligence is twofold. It devises means for the satisfaction of the organism's wants. And it adjusts various wants. But in so doing it constitutes no values. It may seek to bring desires into some kind of accord, but if so that is because there is a desire for harmony which makes use of intelligence in its pursuit of satisfaction. Only to desire or to take an affective-volitional attitude toward an object is to value it. *Intelligence never creates value*—this is a cardinal principle of the relational theory of value. "When all the knowledge is got that can be got, when we have obtained as clear vision as with our human limitations we can obtain, still we shall find ourselves passively contemplating a wan and colorless future unless our desires rise up

to seize some envisaged possibility and invest it with the charm of the ideal." [9]

These words of Professor McGilvary show clearly how *knowing or the cognitive relation* is excluded from *valuing* in realistic theory of value. With William James, realism proclaims that "the essence of good is simply to satisfy demand." [10]

Now the meliorists, among whom Professors B. H. Bode and M. C. Otto may be selected as typical, accept this theory that a value is created by the satisfaction of any desire. Thus, in his criticism of Professor McGilvary, Professor Otto writes: "The purpose of the discussion which follows is in no sense to challenge the relativity of morality. On that point I am glad to express my complete accord with Professor McGilvary. I am the more happy to do so since it was Professor McGilvary who, as my first teacher, first introduced me to the conception. For this, which I now regard as the most pregnant idea gained in my university course, I shall always be deeply indebted to him." [11] And later he interprets this relativity to mean that "morality is not formal,

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[9] *Hibbert Journal,* Vol. XIV, p. 62. Compare R. B. Perry: "A Definition of Value," *Journal of Philosophy,* Vol. XI, pp. 141*ff.*

[10] William James: *The Will to Believe,* p. 301.

[11] *International Journal of Ethics,* Vol. XXXI, p. 5. All other quotations from Professor Otto are from this article, which has recently been republished as Chapter IV of his *Things and Ideals* (Henry Holt and Company), with the references to Professor McGilvary expunged.

abstract, unrelated to the concrete wants and purposes of men," which shows, when positively construed, that he accepts the theory that moral value is a relation between concrete wants and desires and what satisfies them. And Professor Bode shows that he accepts this theory of value in his definition of *intrinsic value:* "When we set out to realize an aim, we may do so because the end that is sought has a value on its own account, it is something that is directly appreciated. Men seek fame, wealth, power, comfort, luxury, because these things have an immediate value, which requires no explanation or justification. As James remarks: 'Not one man in a billion, when taking his dinner, ever thinks of utility. He eats because the food tastes good and makes him want more.' " [12] In other words, as the quotation from James shows, intrinsic value is created whenever an immediate want or desire is satisfied.

Yet both of these thinkers refuse to accept the exclusion of intelligence from valuing. They want the satisfaction of desire to be constitutive of value, but they also want the satisfaction of intelligence to be constitutive of value. Thus Otto complains that McGilvary substitutes one form of absolutism for another. "In place of an eternal, immutable ethical truth we now have an indefinite number of impulses, aims, purposes, ideals, each absolute

[12] B. H. Bode: *Fundamentals of Education* (The Macmillan Company), p. 22.

in its own right. If they are relative to some accepted scheme of life, if they were subservient to a good set up after a survey of the situation in which they arose, then an adjustment might be made in harmony with this scheme or good." In other words, intelligence, in making a survey of the situation, creates a good which is of a higher order than that created by the mere satisfaction of desire. The two value-orders are even set in opposition to each other. "Something in the face of aspiring humanity has flowered, as far as our human knowledge goes, in human intelligence, in man's ability to imagine a fairer life than the immediately experienced one and in his skill gradually to translate the vision into fact." Here the skill of human intelligence is definitely set down as the creator of highest value, "fairer" than "the immediately experienced," which can only mean better than any value created in the satisfaction of an immediate want. Immediate satisfactions are admittedly values, but the vision which human intelligence imagines, and then gradually actualizes, is a far, far higher value. Bode [13] also writes of "examining motives and aims in the light of the larger good," thereby making intelligence "free and responsible," and making possible the "vision of a world in which men may dwell together in the freedom and equality of common devotion to ideal ends." Now all of this shows that there is work-

[13] *International Journal of Ethics,* Vol. XXIX, p. 404.

ing here another theory of value alongside of the relational theory.

What is this good set up after a survey of the situation? Bode answers that it is the dwelling together of all desires "in the freedom and equality of common devotion to ideal ends," it is a "completely socialized world." And how is it to be attained? By an adjustment and harmonization of desires, which process shall even go the limit of eliminating such desires as refuse to be adjusted, of modifying others, and of creating whatever new desires are needed to effect a complete adjustment. Here, then, is the old friend of students of ethics which first came into the science in the *Dialogues* of Plato, *the harmony theory of value.* But it is our old friend in a new dress. For this harmonization is not to be effected by an individual rational soul nor by the functioning in human experience of a transcendent God or transcendental idea of good. It is to be effected by human intelligence in the technical sense in which the word is used by pragmatists. Desires are multitudinous atoms, each after its own satisfaction. Intelligence is one, the same in you and in me, an all-pervading *social intelligence.* The pressure of this onward rushing social intelligence is the creative force which welds crude atomic desires into a harmonious whole. The satisfaction of this social intelligence will create a fairer value than the satisfactions of purely indi-

vidual wants, however numerous they may be.

In the thinking of the meliorists, then, there operate two distinct theories of value, one that value is constituted by the satisfaction of any desire, the other that value is constituted by the harmonization or adjustment of desires. According to the first theory, value is a matter of quantity, the larger the number of desires which are satisfied the greater the amount of value. According to the second theory, value is a matter of degree of adjustment, the more completely all-existing desires are harmonized the more value. Thus two better worlds are in the premises. One a world in which a larger number of desires are satisfied and a fewer number thwarted than in this world; the other a world in which adjustments are more perfect than in this world. The goal of the first would be a condition in which all desires are satisfied and none thwarted. The goal of the second would be a state in which all desires are completely harmonized. Thus in one place Otto says: "The end we seek is the completest life for every human being." Here he is evidently using the relational theory of value, the largest possible number of satisfied desires for the largest possible number of human beings, would evidently be the completest life for every human being. And then he at once shifts to the harmony theory, although still retaining the relational

theory, when he says that the "end is such an adjustment of conflicting ideals as will secure the greatest proportionate satisfaction of the ideals involved." Read here desires for ideals, which is in accord with Otto's usage, and you have both theories mixed up together. Then a little farther on he writes that the end is "something to be created out of the impulses and desires of men through the application of creative intelligence to the conflicts of ideals." And this is equivalent again to Bode's idea of a completely socialized world. In other words, the harmony theory of value, adapted to pragmatism, is here at work.

One of the most important implications of this dual theory of value is the principle of *proportionate satisfaction for all desires*, enunciated by Professor Otto in one of the sentences just quoted, but characteristic of the social ethics of the *meliorists* quite generally. It really grows out of the now famous psychological doctrine of Dr. Sigmund Freud and the psychoanalytic school which he founded, that every human being is a congeries of desires or wishes which are craving for satisfaction but are *suppressed*, and then kept *repressed* by social conventions acting through the individual's intelligence. Freud calls the intelligence a censor, and, needless to say, the religious scruples of conventional society, which in this country at least are strongly puritanical, exercise a tremendous influence on the censor both for sup-

pression and for repression. The Freudian theory is that many of these suppressed wishes might be given satisfaction without detriment to the character of the individual, and this is undoubtedly right. But the meliorists drop the idea of an individual censor, and make the whole existing social order the censor. All suppression and all repression is due to the existing social order. Hence, all sin and guilt are due to the fact that society is not organized so as to give adequate satisfaction to the desires of men. The theory of proportionate satisfaction is put forth to correct the present policy of social suppression and repression of human desires.

Suppose, for example, a social order consisting of a million desires, and suppose, too, that there is no possibility of obtaining a large enough quantum of satisfaction adequately to meet the demands of the entire million. Then, according to this principle, the best organization of such a social order will be the one which is so arranged that what there is in the way of supply will be so equitably divided that any one of the million desires will get exactly as much satisfaction as any other. To be sure, this is an over-simplification of the principle of proportionate satisfaction, but it illustrates what is evidently meant by it. It is self-evident, so the meliorists would argue, that if one of the desires in a given society gets satisfied and another does not, or if one gets a larger

amount of satisfaction in proportion to its need than another, the society in question is not equitably arranged, and is, therefore, unethical.

This leads to a second implication of the theory. Proportionate satisfaction is impossible as long as the separate desires are at loggerheads with each other in their pursuit of satisfaction. They must be adjusted and this adjustment must be accomplished by intelligence. But being desires they have no intelligence of their own, so that the adjustment has to come from without. The ultimate power which will bring about the adjustment is the single, unified, social intelligence. The only possible way in which every separate desire can get its quota of satisfaction is for the social consciousness as a whole to bring about such an adjustment among desires that each will be satisfied with whatever amount of satisfaction social intelligence decrees to be a fair share according to its principle of proportionate satisfaction. When each desire is so adjusted to every other that it gets its proportionate share of satisfaction, society will have reached a condition of stable equilibrium so far as its organization is concerned. Thus the idea of a stable equilibrium of organization is the second implication of the dual theory of value of the meliorists.

Then follows the third implication that the unified social intelligence must find a way of eliminating desires, and of increasing the total quan-

tum of satisfaction until every separate desire gets all of the satisfaction it wants. We must create a social order in which there are enough of the good things of life fully to satisfy every desire in it. Birth control, for example, is a practical method of limiting the number of desires which are to be allowed to come into existence, whereas the giving of an adequate amount of leisure to every individual will enable him to satisfy more fully such desires as cannot be satisfied while he is at work. When society reaches the stage where every desire is fully satisfied a condition of stable equilibrium will be attained so far as the quantum of satisfaction is concerned. This will usher in the social theologian's millennium of "the complete life for every human being."

It goes without saying that the unified social intelligence cannot hope to reach both of these conditions of stable equilibrium at the same time. Nor is it thought that either of them can be immediately established in an actually existing social order. As a matter of fact both are admitted to be in the dimly remote future. The social consciousness is an infinite evolutionary process. We are now in the stage in which it is just beginning to become conscious of itself as a unified whole, the stage in which, therefore, the problems of harmonizing desires, of distributing to each its proportionate satisfaction, of regulating the number of desires which are to be permitted to come into

existence, and of creating æsthetic and other spiritual values so as to augment the total available quantum of satisfaction are just becoming known to social intelligence. It will necessarily take æons for that intelligence to solve them. Hence there is, there must be an endless progress ahead of the social consciousness. This idea of an infinite series of increasingly better social orders, arising out of the steady application of the master intelligence of the whole social organism to the solution of its problems, may be said to be the fourth basic idea in the ethical doctrine of this social philosophy. It follows directly from the conception of the social consciousness being the ultimate creative principle in the universe.

Altruistic theological utilitarianism is simply the application of this social ethics of the meliorists to religion. A man is religious in so far as he realizes his essential oneness with the social consciousness, makes its problems his problems, and joins it in the pursuit of the sort of social order in which these problems can be solved. Herein is to be found man's real happiness. As we lay aside our egotistic prejudices and become fully aware that we are sharers in the activities of the one creative social intelligence, we become religious. It is then, to use again the language of Paley, that we are actuated by the one internal purpose of pleasing God. It is indeed then that we become one with God. Here in this temporal turmoil

of existence is our Eldorado. Here in the forge of earth, where we can coöperate in hammering out the kingdom of God, is to be found not only man's opportunity but his blessed assurance. Too long has religion been otherworldly, looking afar to the abode where the eternal is for its city of refuge. Precisely here, on this speck in space called the earth, laboring to make a better social order together with the only friends we human beings have—each other, may we intelligently hope to lay a sound foundation for durable human satisfaction.

Thus Professor Ames writes: "To be antisocial is far deeper heresy than to be atheistic with reference to the Determiner of Destiny as often conceived." And after a brief enumeration of the accomplishments of the social intelligence, such as the prevention and cure of disease, the making of desolate deserts blossom and yield fruit, the opening of highways in the air, over the seas and across the mountains, communication by wireless, by printing and by motion pictures, and such like human activities, he writes:

> The sense of participating in a social experience of this character and magnitude is not lacking in genuine religious significance. It generates an impressive mystical quality and furnishes the elements of a vital and reasonable faith. The finest devotional moods, including prayer and meditation, are vitalized and refined. The meaning of God as the Common Will and the Great

Companion furnish conceptions of the divine which are at once intimate and commanding.[14]

What, now, is to be thought of this type of social ethics? It is quite obvious that the meliorists make the tacit assumption that an increase in the degree of adjustment among conflicting desires will carry with it the satisfaction of a larger number of desires. But would "a completely socialized world" be one in which the largest possible number of desires would be satisfied and the fewest possible thwarted? If not, these writers equivocate when they assume these two ends to be identical. This is the first logical defect in the social philosophy of meliorism. Operating with two distinct theories of value it reaches two distinct conceptions of a better world, and then assumes that they are identical.

That the assumption of the identity of these two ends is unwarranted can be proven both empirically and theoretically. There is no evidence that an increase of adjustment always entails an increase in satisfaction. All of the empirical evidence seems to point to the fact that an over-adjustment will destroy satisfaction rather than increase it. In such communities as approximately perfect adjustments have been made, initiative has been killed, and men have sought another atmosphere in which adventure was possible. What

[14] *Journal of Religion*, Vol. I, p. 270.

does our world not owe to its mystics, its hermits, its non-conformists, its iconoclasts, and all the others who, in refusing to be welded into the social organism, have found a satisfaction which they praise as the acme of human existence? Many natural processes reach their culmination, and how do we know but that the culmination of the process of adjustment has already been reached or may speedily be reached? How do we know but that the time may soon come when further adjustment or attempts at adjustment will crush more desires than it will satisfy?

If there is no possibility of finding an empirical proof that a completely socialized world is identical with the completest possible life for every human being, neither can it be established theoretically. For perfect or complete satisfaction without any adjustment, and complete adjustment of desires without any satisfaction are both conceivable. One can assume a world in which there are one thousand desires, all out of harmony with respect to each other, and yet each in the relation of being satisfied to its separate object. And one can assume a world in which there are one thousand desires, none of which is in the relation of being satisfied to any object, yet all of which are perfectly adjusted to one another. And the two sets would be opposite instead of identical. Now this proves that there is no theoretical necessity in identifying totality of satisfaction with perfection of adjust-

ment. How, then, can an assumption that they are identical be justified? But if the assumption cannot be justified, is not such an identification a logical equivocation?

Having now disposed of the dual theory of value of the meliorists, let us examine briefly its implications. In the first place, the principle of the proportionate satisfaction of all desires is unquestionably a false principle in social ethics when it is taken as the only principle of distributing values. The need of adjustment is not denied, but it cannot adequately be met by trying directly to satisfy every desire. In fact it is precisely because of the necessity of adjustment that some desires must give way to others. Hence, for this principle of proportionate satisfaction the new theists would substitute what Professor Hocking has aptly called *vicarious satisfaction* of our desires.[15] This means that some desires must be sacrificed to the satisfaction of others. Such satisfaction as they get is the vicarious type of satisfaction, like that of a mother who chooses death that her child may live. We must abandon the misleading hope that absolutely every desire can be directly satisfied. Many desires will either never find satisfaction at all, or else they must be content with the vicarious type of satisfaction. In truth a social order which had reached the stage where every desire received from the environment

[15] See *Philosophical Review*, Vol. XXV, p. 485.

its proportional share of satisfaction directly would necessarily be worse than the present social order, because the main incentives of life would be lacking. Whence comes the driving power which sends men out to do the world's work and keeps the social process moving, if not from the very fact that unsatisfied desires force men to wrest their satisfaction from the environment? The principle of proportionate satisfaction is not only theoretically false, it is unworkable in actual practice. For if it were consistently and thoroughly applied in a social order individuals would be robbed of the joy of striving, which is a type of satisfaction than which there is none greater, as has been generally recognized since the time of Aristotle.

Yet who can really believe that either of the stages of stable equilibrium is actually attainable? Who can believe that there ever was or ever will be a social order, reached in and by the natural processes of social evolution, in which every existing desire without any exception whatsoever will find a satisfaction which is mathematically proportionate to that of every other? And who can really think that there ever will be such a balancing of the number of desires with the total quantum of satisfaction that each will be fully satisfied, so that the social theologian's ideal of the complete life for every human being will be realized here in our finite existence? Bentham's famous "hedonic calculus" turned out to be power-

less to strike a balance of pleasure over pain for a single individual dealing with two such simple experiences as playing pushpin and reading poetry, and we may be perfectly sure that no calculus or any other scheme of measurement will ever be devised which can strike a balance of quantum of satisfaction and number of desires for any entire social order.

However, even if it were devised, we should still be a long way from a condition of affairs in which either one of these stages of stable equilibrium could actually be reached. Consider, for example, economic values. Doubtless they may be enormously increased as the natural resources of this hospitable planet, and possibly of the whole solar system, are made available for man's use. Yet is it conceivable that there will ever be such an equitable distribution of these values that absolutely every desire in the whole social order for such goods can receive its proportionate satisfaction? Such a supposition is not only highly improbable, it is simply inconceivable as an actual state of affairs. Doubtless, too, we may make a great deal of headway toward eliminating antisocial ideals and toward restricting the number of desires in the social order, as well as toward increasing the quantum of æsthetic and other spiritual values. Yet who can imagine a stage of social evolution in which quantum of goods exactly equates demand? The two ideals of the social ethics of so-

cial theology are not only infinitely remote from the present social order, they are, so far as earthly civilization is concerned, as unreachable as the proverbial pot of gold that lies at the end of the rainbow.

Consider next the assumption that human progress will go on forever and forever, and that each successive stage in the evolution of social consciousness will be better than its next predecessor. Since this type of social ethics boasts of being scientific, it is pertinent to ask for the facts on which so generous an assumption rests. Nor does it suffice to say "we will have it so," on the ground that morality is concerned with the ideals which we will, rather than with actual factual realities. For this is a question of the real nature of progress in the natural world. Is it really a fact that progress is of such a nature that it can go on forever, so that it can be paradoxically but truthfully said that *the end is progress?* Certainly we do not know this to be true of any empirical progress which is familiar to us in our finite experience. For every line of development which we know anything about in nature appears to reach a certain culmination, to flourish there for an indefinite but relatively brief interval, and then begins to disintegrate. Progress is like an ocean wave. It ascends rapidly to a high crest, trembles there for an instant, then breaks in mist and spray, only to rush pell-mell into a deep trough. And the run-

ning down into the trough appears to be just as essential a part of the process as the running up to the crest.

Applying this to the evolution of social consciousness, what right have we to assume that there is only one part of the movement present in this case, namely, the ascending to the crest, and that this is to be an endless mounting of human civilization to higher and ever higher levels? For all we know, our own age may be the very heyday of earthly civilization. We may be at or nearing the crest of the wave of progress, not only of European but of all earthly life whatsoever. Indeed the World War may have marked the breaking point, and we may be the spray which it threw up, destined for a speedy plunge into the fathomless depths of the great cosmic ocean in which we are moving. As Troeltsch has well said, there is far more certainty about the advent of the last man cooking the last potato with the last fire of coals, than of the realization of a completely socialized world. Or, in the words of the great American philosopher to whom the doctrine of meliorism owes its origin:

> One may even fear that the *being* of man may be crushed by his own powers, that his fixed nature as an organism may not prove adequate to stand the strain of the ever increasingly tremendous functions, almost divine creative functions, which his intellect will more and more enable him to wield. He may drown in his

wealth like a child in a bathtub, who has turned on the water and who cannot turn it off.[16]

Pointing out the inherent logical defects in meliorism at least proves that its adherents are ultimately forced to base their entire social philosophy on an act of faith. Over against their claim to a scientific social ethics this is no small gain. Yet the new theism is placed in a disadvantageous position in so far as our critical analysis of the theory of value and of the basic implications of meliorism leaves the impression that working for human welfare is to be repudiated. The above critique has failed to bring to light the real truth in this type of social ethics. It has not distinguished the wheat from the chaff.

All of the values of meliorism, and it has many, are entirely compatible with a liberal interpretation of theism. Believers in God should also be believers in the possibility of improving social conditions. Christianity and Judaism alike demand of

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[16] William James: *Pragmatism,* p. 187. For other new theists' criticisms of the idea of progress see Harry Emerson Fosdick: *Christianity and Progress,* Chap. i; J. A. Leighton: *Religion and the Mind of Today,* Chap. xxx, and Dean Ralph Inge: *Outspoken Essays,* 2nd Series, Chap. iii. A sympathetic history of the idea by a positivist is J. B. Bury's *The Idea of Progress.* See my criticism in the *Philosophical Review,* Vol. XXX, pp. 528*ff*. For an explanation of why an idealistic social theory can never regard progress as an ultimate goal see Count Keyserling's suggestive distinction between progress and spiritualization in *The Travel Diary of a Philosopher,* Vol. I, pp. 132-138, and Vol. II, pp. 347*ff*.

all their adherents that they put the welfare of mankind second only to their reverence for and worship of God. The doctrine of the brotherhood of man is a direct corollary of that of the fatherhood of God. Hence the attempt to build a more satisfactory social order than we now have is entirely consistent with monotheism. There can be no question but what the Hebrew prophets and Jesus would be on the side of every effort for human betterment, if they were living on the earth to-day. The lofty idealism of meliorism—what devotee of a moral religion could condemn a thing so worthy? Moreover, the sublime faith of the meliorists in the capacity of human intelligence is reassuring, and, if such qualifications as are necessitated by our knowledge of human limitations are made, we may confidently believe that it is well placed. The endeavor to make a social order in which there will be ample opportunity for all men to live a life devoted to ideal ends is commendable. Every one will admit that there is much room for improvement in the existing social order in this respect. Where, then, is the real nub of the difficulty in meliorism?

Christian though its program be, this social philosophy can never escape the fact that it is essentially a *gospel of discontent*, and is, therefore, absolutely impractical for the vast majority of human beings. If men generally are taught that the sole reason why they are not getting full satis-

faction for their wants is that human society is not adequately organized to subserve that purpose, if large numbers of people accept the belief that such an organization of earthly society is their one and only hope of getting satisfaction, if they completely abandon the belief in God and entirely neglect the cultivation of inner fortitude and endurance, they will perforce become the victims of cynicism and despair. The great saying of St. Paul: "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content" is fundamentally irreconcilable with the social philosophy of the meliorists. Yet how can the principle it states be surrendered and happiness be found? That character, inner rectitude of will, self-mastery and self-discipline, and the ability to do without ungrudgingly are in themselves of inestimable social value, regardless of the type or degree of perfection of organization of that society in which they may come to expression, is a sublime truth which finds little place in this philosophy of life. Meliorism completely ignores the profound insight into the meaning of morality, expressed in the greatest saying of General Robert E. Lee: "Human virtue should be equal to human calamity." It offers no balm for the defeated, no refuge for the weary, the infirm and the aged, no comfort or solace for the bereaved. More than that, it fails to recognize the besetting sins of those who, in obedience to its own high ideal of human service, strive to the utmost

for human betterment and tirelessly work for a completely socialized world.

> In theory it may seem more beautiful to live for others instead of for oneself, but if you take men as they are, active love of their neighbors does not make them more generous but more mean in heart; it is only in exceptional cases that it does not develop into importunity and tyranny. How tactless are all the people who insist on improving their fellows! How narrow-minded are the missionaries! No matter how open-hearted a man may be by nature—no matter if the faith he confesses be the most universal in the world—the mere desire for proselytizing limits him, for psychologically it always signifies the same thing: the imposition of your own view upon another human being. Any one who does this is *ipso facto* limited, and any one who does it continuously, or even professionally, must needs become more and more limited from day to day.[17]

And sometimes it is precisely because of these sins that society repudiates its would-be reformers, spews them out of her mouth and heaps curses upon them,—

> That they may feel
> How like a serpent's tooth it is
> To have a thankless child.

Though great souls may escape it, the practical consequence of the social philosophy of the melior-

[17] Count Hermann Keyserling: *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 51*f*. Reprinted with the permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company.

ists is the breeding of ingratitude and discontent.

Thus the greatest defect in the altruistic utilitarianism of social theology is a paradox not unlike the famous "paradox of hedonism." For just as the making of pleasure the only goal of human endeavor defeats an individual's efforts to get it, so the making of a perfect earthly society the only goal brings insidious evils into the lives of those who pursue it, breeds widespread social discontent, and in consequence inflicts irreparable injury on society. It is doubtful whether there is any escape from this paradox of meliorism save in the subordination of the service of man to the service of God. Wary, indeed, must be the man who, without the vision of that non-earthly City of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, can work for human welfare and not lose his own soul. This brings us to the social philosophy of the new theism, although we must needs return again to these problems when we consider in Chapter V how men are to meet the facts of evil in their experience.

The new theists definitely recognize that human society, like all other natural objects, bears branded upon its body the image of death. Yet they are not monkishly ascetic. They do not deny that man has physical needs. They realize that a certain quota of physical enjoyments and of economic goods are beneficial to man, and essential to his existence here on earth. They recognize that

surplus wealth is an indispensable prerequisite to the building up of cultural values. Yet, as we have already indicated, theists hold no brief for the present industrial order, but, on the contrary they are aware both of its iniquities and of its inequities. Thus Troeltsch scathingly condemns modern capitalism: "With its calculating coldness and soullessness, its unscrupulous greed and pitilessness, its turning to gain for gain's sake, to fierce and ruthless competition, its agonizing lust of victory, its blatant satisfaction in the tyrannical power of the merchant class," and there are few theists who would not agree with this indictment.[18] Moreover, one of the outstanding facts in the lives of new theists is the unstinted support they have given and are giving to various specific endeavors to remedy existing evils in society. Yet they never lose sight of the fact that the most perfect earthly society man can hope to actualize will fall far short of meeting his deepest needs. Just because the evolutionary process, of which natural earthly society is a part, is relatively ephemeral and transitory, the new theists seek elsewhere for the fountain of happiness.[19]

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[18] E. Troeltsch: *Protestantism and Progress,* p. 139. Compare J. A. Leighton: *Religion and the Mind of Today,* pp. 83-96.

[19] Just as Wobbermin has done the most systematically to develop the method of the new theism, so Troeltsch has made the greatest contribution to its social philosophy. In addition to the work just cited, which is in English (Crown Theological Library), see his monumental *Die Sociallehren der Christlichen*

The theory of value on which the social ethics of the new theism rests is not a psychological doctrine, now happily becoming obsolete, which severs man's consciousness into a unified social consciousness or intelligence, on the one hand, and an unnumbered and innumerable host of clamoring, ravening, warring desires, on the other hand. On the contrary, it is explicitly a metaphysical theory which identifies the good with the real. It is admittedly true that whatever value objects in nature have for us comes from the fact that we want them. The value of things is a purely relative and derivative value. And it is derived from the fact that spiritual beings, in their quest for the real, tarry awhile to sample these various mundane goods. But from a psychological point of view, far more important than the pell-mell pursuit of its own quota of satisfaction indulged in by each separate desire, is the struggle of the spirit of man to find out what it really wants, what will satisfy it as a spirit, bring to it harmony and peace and rest.

Kirchen und Gruppen, Bd. I, Ges. Schriften, and his *Grundprobleme der Ethik* and *Was heisst "Wesen des Christentums"?,* both of which have been republished in Bd. II, Ges. Schriften. Excellent synopses of his social theory will be found in R. S. Sleigh's *The Sufficiency of Christianity and Ernst Troeltsch* and in Baron von Hugel's *Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion,* Chap. vi. A social philosophy like that of Troeltsch is expounded by W. E. Hocking in *The Meaning of God in Human Experience,* and in *Human Nature and Its Remaking;* by J. A. Leighton in *Man and the Cosmos* and in *Religion and the Mind of Today;* and by Josiah Royce in *The Problems of Christianity,* 2 vols., and in the *Hope of the Great Community.*

Life on earth, with its incessant, absorbing struggle for the various goods of daily existence, is for the very purpose of making man aware of what he really wants. The fact that man gives things their value makes him more valuable than they.

And what is he? Primarily he is a spiritual being who can never be satisfied with the ephemeral values of sense just because these values are his own creation. To find a more real object he must ultimately turn toward the kind of reality which he himself is. This even the social theologians, and the meliorists generally, admit in their doctrine that the ideal of a completely socialized world is higher than the ideal of satisfying separate desires. Human beings are far more real than physical things just because they have an intelligence, a self-consciousness, and a personality which physical things do not have. Yet human beings cannot really worship themselves, either as individuals or as a unified whole, a social consciousness. For the worship of purely finite beings is unsatisfying, and every human being and every social order on earth and the earthly social consciousness itself is finite and destined to disappear. Beyond themselves, beyond the earthly social consciousness of humanity as a whole, exalted above the whole realm of the finite and temporal order of reality, is the celestial kingdom of God and the transcendent God in whom its children and we live. Thus man's high-

est good is the ultimate fountain of his own personal being. Those who, in their earthly career, locate this source of all goodness participate in the spiritual kingdom of God, that blessed community of souls united in the common purpose of cultivating and promulgating the love of truth and of beauty and of goodness, all of which are the essence of God.

The new theists are, therefore, led to the doctrine that human society is twofold in its structure. On the one hand there is the economic, political, utilitarian social order within which men are pursuing the values of everyday life. And on the other hand, there is the ideal social order constituted by the conscious communion of men with God. This pursuit of an eternal and infinite value, which all spiritual beings can reach without competing with one another, binds such beings into a society of a far, far higher order than the politico-economic social order. For the latter gets whatever luster it has from its relation to the Infinite Goodness toward which the love of spiritual beings goes out. The ethical value of any existing social order is wholly determined by the extent to which it affords men the opportunity and encourages them to participate in the appreciation of this spiritual world. In so far as a social order causes men to overestimate the value of the comforts of natural existence, and blinds them to the existence of the spiritual world, it is vicious and bad. And it is

bad regardless of the number and the degree of adjustment of the desires finding satisfaction in it. The ethical value of any natural society comes from its relation to the spiritual world, which man may share while living his finite existence, but which is itself deeper and higher than the transitory evolutionary process known as social melioration which is going on here on earth.

Have you not heard of the land where Beauty and Love are eternal,
Where from the fullness of life nothing is ever withdrawn,
Save that a clear pure stream, with imperceptible current,
Glides through the Lake of Peace into the Ocean of Joy?
Here, on this bloodstain'd Earth, that land has never existed:
Here is no lake of peace, here is no ocean of joy;
And if the rivers flow, they move to their own destruction,
Lured into stormy seas foul with the wrecks of the Past.
Not in a group like ours, one sun with his handful of planets,
Riding obscurely alone, lost in a corner of Space,
Nor in such nobler worlds as the gorgeous suns of Orion,
Nor in those uttermost orbs ne'er to be noted or known;
Not in all these is the land where Beauty and Love are eternal,
Where in a dream of delight spirits united abide.

For there is never an orb but is molded of changeable matter,
Shaped by the lapse of time, bound to its own little curve,
Fused into form after form, one mode succeeding another,
But, whatsoever it be, dead as the heart of a stone.
These cannot yield us our quest, the limitless life that we long for.
These cannot offer a place meet for the souls of the just:
Nay, we may search with our eyes through the splendid expanse of the heavens,
Roving from star to star, wistfully seeking a home;
But there is none to be found, nor can be, in such a Creation,
Made but of tangible stuff, drifting like us to its doom.
Look to the light of God, the core of ultimate Being,
Safe from the thraldom of sense, not to be touched with decay:
There, only there is the land where Beauty and Love are eternal;
There is our haven of rest, there is the home of the soul.

"Heimweh," by ARTHUR MUNBY.

Yet this duality in the social structure must never be interpreted as compelling man to make a choice between the goods of earth and the Infinite Good, as though to gain heaven he must fly from earth. On the contrary "the meek shall inherit the earth," and those who seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness shall have everything else added unto them. There need be no

ultimate dualism here simply because it is the immanence of the Infinite and Eternal Goodness in all of the mundane values of life which gives them such durability as they possess. Man is a member of both social orders. As a finite creature he lives in the economic-political world, and impelled by the ideal of the Infinite Good he creates the institutions which give that earthly society its spiritual reality and value. He transforms the crude and shapeless physical and psychical impulses of uncultivated, original human nature into ethical values of the greatest range and moment. The indwelling moral spirit in man, a truly divine spark, turns the sexual nature into the family, the complex of social instincts into the state, the physical cravings for food, shelter and possessions into industry, the vague and chaotic appreciations of beauty into art, curiosity and the desire to control both nature and human nature into science, and his religious moods and intimations into institutionalized religion. In the midst of Time, immersed in the evolutionary process of the Here and Now, by virtue of a creativity whose source is God, man builds a magnificent temple of spiritual values. But to those who know how to approach it, there dwells in the Holy of Holies of this spiritual temple the Absolute Good—a spiritual kingdom of personalities in union with the transcendent God. For in addition to being a member of the politico-economic society, every man is virtually

a member of this spiritual society, too. In the very process of participating in the making of the spiritual institutions just mentioned, the individual comes to a consciousness of himself as a supranatural, ethical personality and as a member of a kingdom of personalities. He learns that his life should alternate between participating in the creative acts of human society by which civilization is continually being enriched, and worshiping the infinite creativity of God. For only in such an alternation can genuine human happiness be found. It is a proper balance, a just mean between working for human betterment and renewing the creative power through worship of its infinite source.

"In very truth there does exist an Ethic *sub specie temporis*, and an Ethic *sub specie æternitatis*" (Troeltsch). The root defect of meliorism is that it denies the latter. For when this is done the family sinks to a regulated sexual enjoyment or to a device for controlling property, the state becomes just a policeman regulating human traffic in its pursuit of worldly honors, art becomes the capricious handmaiden of amusement, industry a ruthless scramble after gold, science an outlet for the energies of people of leisure, and religion fizzles into emotionalism and controversy. On the other hand, the fallacy of orthodox religion is to be found in its denial of the Ethic *sub specie temporis*. For this makes the earthly activities of men utterly

meaningless and produces that vicious other-worldliness which curses extreme mysticism and monasticism. Relaxing its grip on life the soul cries out for the wings of a dove that it may fly away and be at rest, leaving the foul world to wallow in its mire. The new theism asserts the validity of both types of Ethic, and finds the very meaning of human existence in the maintenance of a delicate equilibrium between nature and supernature, the finite and the infinite social orders. It bids men strenuously to pursue the ideal of creating a fairer civilization, to contribute all they can to the enrichment of the spiritual values issuing from human strivings, but it calls them back to God for the renewal of their strength. And it commits the destiny of the values created by humanity unto Him who is able to do exceedingly and abundantly above all that we can ask or even think. Nor does it deceive itself, as does doctrinaire idealism and religious fanaticism, by thinking that nature and human nature are capable of an absolute ethical transformation here in time. Rather does it accept the conflict as an everlasting wrestling, justified by its fruition in ethical personality.

In conclusion it should be especially emphasized that two opposing conceptions of the essence of religion grow out of these conflicting social philosophies. According to the social theologians, as is clearly apparent from the quotations from Professor Ames above, religion is identical with the

consciousness of oneness with the group, and with the participation in group activities and strivings to satisfy purely mundane needs and desires. In every coöperative enterprise for human betterment man is religious, nor does being religious mean anything else but the participation in creative social experience. But to the new theists religion grows out of man's consciousness of his finitude, his knowledge that he is impotent to gain any more than a transitory and relatively feeble control over gigantic cosmic forces, his realization that even the very fullest joys of earth leave the deepest desire of the soul, the yearning for Eternity, unsatisfied. They hold that there is within man an inner awareness or at least an inner intimation of another Mind, transcending the social consciousness, and that every self-conscious person is restless, no matter how complete may be the enjoyments of earth, until he gets into the relation of spiritual communion with this supertemporal, supernatural Mind. William James' *Varieties of Religious Experience* is packed full of examples of the pursuit and attainment of an experience of this Eternal Mind.

Now the new theists never tire of pointing out that even the enemies of the belief in the reality of such a Mind nevertheless unconsciously admit the presence in themselves of that profound yearning out of which the religious experience grows. Consider, for instance, Friedrich Nietzsche's famous

Mitternachtslied, which his friends and admirers have had chiseled on a monument to him in the Upper Engadine.

O man! Take heed!
What saith deep midnight's voice indeed?
"I slept my sleep—
From deepest dream I've woke and plead—
The world is deep,
And deeper than the day could read.
Deep is its woe—
Joy—deeper still than grief can be:
Woe saith: Hence! Go!
But joys all want eternity—
Want deep profound eternity!" [20]

Here the greatest enemy of the Christian religion since Celsus has given expression to the profound yearning for Eternity out of which re-

[20] I have taken this from the English translation of the works of Nietzsche, Vol. II, p. 279. Here is the original (WW. VI, p. 332):

O Mensch! Gib acht!
Was spricht die tiefe Mitternacht?
"Ich schlief, ich schlief—,
Aus tiefem Traum bin ich erwacht:—
Die Welt ist tief,
Und tiefer als der Tag Gedacht.
Tief ist ihr Weh—,
Lust—tiefer noch als Herzeleid:
Weh spricht: Vergeh,
Doch alle Lust will Ewigkeit!
Will tiefe, tiefe Ewigkeit!"

See my translation of Georg Wobbermin's *Christian Belief in God* (Yale Press), pp. 1-12, for a fuller discussion of the relation of the ideas expressed by Nietzsche in this poem to the inner motives of religion.

ligion grows. For the new theist religion is the pursuit of an object, or rather of a personal Being, who can satisfy man's most ardent yearning for a perfection and fullness of life such as nowhere exists in the ephemeral processes of nature. Religion is man's deliberate effort to penetrate beyond the mysterious veil of nature, physical and social alike, to the invisible and perfect God, who planted a restless yearning for Himself in man's spirit when He evolved him from the star dust out of which the earth was formed. Thus social philosophy leads the new theists through natural society to an ideal, blessed community of spirits, who live, move, and have their being in God.

Chapter IV

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

THE doctrine of God has always been and doubtless always will be the central core around which all theology crystallizes. And among the numerous bitter conflicts in the history of religion over the proper and true way of conceiving of the divine nature three have been especially portentous. The first gathers around the disjunctive question: Is God one or are there many gods? In general this question has been answered by the higher religions, or, at least by the purest piety of the great ethnic and redemptive religions with the doctrine of monotheism, but William James is probably right in holding that "the original polytheism of mankind has only imperfectly and vaguely sublimated itself into monotheism." [1] Nevertheless, as a people develops culturally there is unquestionably a tendency for polytheism to become sublimated into monotheism, and even in

[1] *Pragmatism,* p. 298. See Professor Hocking's comment on the doctrine of a finite God, below (p. 123). Compare Count Keyserling, *The Travel Diary of a Philosopher,* Vol. I, pp. 101*ff*. But, in my opinion, an excessive pantheism pervades this otherwise admirable work. See especially Vol. II, p. 17 and p. 246. Compare R. Otto's criticism of omnipresence in *The Idea of the Holy,* p. 219.

polytheistic religions one god is usually supreme.

Then there arises the perplexing problem of whether the deity is to be conceived of as immanent in physical nature and in humanity—an all-pervasive, indwelling spiritual essence; or, on the other hand, as an absolutely transcendent being, high and lifted up, Creator of, but nevertheless exalted infinitely above the whole realm of space-time existence. On this question the great historic faiths of cultured peoples have been divided, both within and without. On the whole, Judaism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity have emphasized transcendence, whereas most of the religions of India have stressed the divine immanence. But within every great religion, sects emphasizing transcendence have existed alongside of those emphasizing immanence. Thus when the Apostles' Creed says: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty," to which was later added "Maker of Heaven and Earth," there is given a brief definition of a transcendent God. But immanence is to the fore when the Hindu evangelist, Vivekananda, writes concerning the Lord of the Vedanta: "He has penetrated everything, the Pure One, the Formless, the Bodiless, the Stainless, He the Knower, He the Great Poet, the Self-existent, He who is giving to every one what he deserves." [2] Thus the emphasis upon immanence generates a *pantheistic conception of God*, like that of

[2] Quoted by William James, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

Spinoza or Bruno, according to which "God is in the blade of grass, in the grain of sand, in the atom that floats in the sunbeam, as well as in the boundless All." Whereas the stressing of transcendence tends towards a *deistic conception*, like that of Voltaire, according to which God created the universe and set it to moving in the beginning of things, but thereafter abandoned it to a relentless mechanistic fate, whilst he retired into the empyrean to dwell amidst his celestial joys.

In attempting to bridge the gap between immanence and transcendence, Christian theologians met with another serious obstacle in the problem of whether God is a triune or a single being. Originating out of a fusion between Hebrew and Christian thought about God and the theology of Plato—with its theory of the idea of the good as the supreme God, the demiurge as the agent who created the physical universe, and the soul of the world as a living principle of unity holding the created universe together,—the trinitarian conception of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is still the dominant conception in Christendom.[3]

Closely connected with these three specific problems, growing out of the more general one of how human beings are to conceive of the divine nature,

[3] For the Platonic elements in the early Christian conception of God see Plato's dialogue, "Timæus" (Jowett's translation).

is a second general problem, namely that of the existence or objective reality of God. Elaborate arguments have been advanced by theologians and Christian philosophers to establish the existence of the deity in whom they believe. Tantalized by the consciousness that though he believed God to be the being than whom none greater can be conceived, he could find no intelligible and convincing proof of the objective reality of such a being, St. Anselm formulated his famous *ontological* argument, according to which such a being must necessarily exist since any being that did exist would naturally be considered greater than a purely imaginary being who lacked existence. That is to say, he argued that the very conception of a being than whom none greater can be conceived implies the objective reality of that being. But St. Augustine had advanced a somewhat similar argument centuries before. And long before St. Augustine the Greek philosophers had worked out the *cosmological* and the *teleological* arguments. According to the former, we may argue from the world as an effect to a God as the First or Prime Cause, on the principle that for every effect there must be a cause. And according to the latter, from the world as a work of art, we may argue to a God who designed it, this being the celebrated *design argument* used in ancient times by Socrates and many others, but effectively rejuvenated in modern times by Archdeacon Paley. Or, in an-

other form, more compatible with the idea of evolution, the teleological argument passes from the empirical fact of a striving for ends in the universe to an intelligent being who established this purposiveness. Now in the form in which these classic arguments are held by all orthodox theologians they were thoroughly undermined by Kant's criticism of rational theology in his great *Critique of Pure Reason.* Hence no liberal theologian would accept them to-day in their traditional form.

Consequently, in considering now the differences between social theologians and the new theists toward the above-mentioned problems, the question of the proofs for the existence of God may be dealt with very briefly. For since the time of Kant all progressive theologians have shifted the emphasis away from abstract philosophical arguments for the existence of God to the searching question: What value does God have in human experience? Answering this question may be regarded as a *value argument* for the existence of God. Such an argument was really initiated by Kant when he made the belief in God one of the necessary postulates of the moral law, at the same time that he insisted upon the primacy of the practical over the theoretical reason. But although answering the above question of value really involves a value argument for God's existence, nevertheless this method of approach does subordinate, and rightly

so, the problem of God's existence to that of His function in human experience. What progressive theologians have always been primarily interested in bringing to light is the essential contribution to human welfare of belief in an actually real God. They are not at all interested in the bare problem of existence *per se*. On this fundamental point the social theologians and the new theists are in substantial agreement, even though they differ considerably in their estimates of the present-day value of the classic arguments.

Briefly stated, the chief difference between the social theologians and the new theists in estimating the value of the classic arguments is that the exclusion of metaphysics or speculative philosophy from theology, as a basic methodological principle, forces the former to discard forthwith the classic proofs as so much "loquacious metaphysical jargon," whereas the latter are anxious to retain whatever kernel of truth there may be in each of these arguments. And although the new theists fully admit the validity of Kant's critique of these classic proofs, in the form in which they were used by the rationalistic theologians who were his contemporaries and are still used by orthodox churchmen, nevertheless they insist that it is possible, in the light of modern knowledge, to reinterpret them so that they will retain at least a modicum of evidential value. For example, Professor Hocking has admirably restated the essential truth of the

ontological argument, and Dr. Wobbermin has rendered a conspicuous service to progressive theology by giving a careful analysis of each of the classic arguments with a view to showing precisely to what extent each is of value in a strictly modern scientific view of the world.[4] Now in attempting to conserve whatever there is of value in the classic proofs, the new theists are certainly in the right as against the uncritical and dogmatic rejection of them which characterizes the attitude of social theologians. Indeed, as we learned in Chapter II, this position of the latter is part and parcel of their conviction that liberal theology must entirely separate itself from all thought which antedates the rise of social psychology. Nevertheless, it must again be emphasized that a progressive theology should be more concerned with the analysis of religious experience itself, and with the problem of the human values which are inherent in that experience, than with the purely theoretical and abstract problem of existence *per se*. Even though the theologian can never really escape the problem of the existence of God it should always be ap-

[4] See W. E. Hocking: *The Meaning of God in Human Experience,* Chap. xxii, and Georg Wobbermin: *Christian Belief in God,* Chaps. iii-v. Professor C. D. Broad evidently overlooked Hocking and Wobbermin when he wrote: "It is universally admitted by philosophers and theologians that the (ontological) argument is logically fallacious." *Hibbert Journal,* Vol. XXIV, p. 43. For although they admit the fallacy pointed out by Kant they attach a great deal more weight to the argument than Mr. Broad's sweeping generalization would imply.

proached from the side of his meaning in human experience.

When we turn to the problem of how the divine nature is best conceived, all progressive theologians center the emphasis on the question of *immanence versus transcendence.* In fact the question of *trinitarianism versus unitarianism* has really been entirely superseded in progressive theology by the problem of the personality of God, a problem which is so inextricably bound up with the question of immanence and transcendence that it may be regarded as one of the aspects of that question. The idea of the personality of God did not become a definite problem for theologians until the time of Schleiermacher, and, as we shall see, it has remained the central idea in the new theist type of theology from that day to this.[5] On the other hand, the social theologians tend to reject the idea of personality as savoring too much of the philosophy of individualism, and seek a conception of God more compatible with their general social philosophy. But it cannot be said that they are anywhere near agreement on this particular doctrine.

Indeed, there are really two distinct tendencies within social theology on this most central and vital

[5] See Clement C. J. Webb: *God and Personality,* pp. 62*f.*, note. Compare J. A. Leighton: *Typical Modern Conceptions of God,* p. 99. "Schleiermacher held to what is of most value in the traditional idea of personality. God is for him the absolute ethical Life, the Infinite and Transcendent Spirit."

issue. Professors Ames and Haydon identify God with humanity, whereas another less radical group teach the doctrine of a finite God, that there is a being not ourselves, or, at least an impersonal power of some sort, working for righteousness and coöperating with humanity to make a better world. Professor Gerald Birney Smith is a typical representative of the latter group. According to him God is "as yet an inadequately defined cosmic support of human values," or, differently expressed, "that quality in environment which supports and enriches humanity in its spiritual quest." [6] While Professor Smith would drop the idea of personality, other advocates of the finite God would retain it. H. G. Wells has recently joined the ranks of this group of social theologians in advocacy of a purely limited God, the "Invisible King" and colaborer with humanity in a mighty effort to eradicate the world's wrongs and to build a fairer social order.

Before dealing somewhat at length with the idea of the first group of social theologians, let us briefly dispose of this conception of a finite God. As a matter of fact, it is not as sharply opposed to the new theist's conception of God as some of

[6] See his "Is Theism Essential to Religion?" *Journal of Religion,* Vol. V, p. 376. This conception of an actually existing environmental quality must be carefully distinguished from the idea that deity will be the next qualitative level of reality to be evolved out of an original space-time matrix, which has been persuasively advocated by Mr. Samuel Alexander in his recent Gifford lectures, *Space, Time and Deity,* 2 vols.

its defenders evidently suppose. Historically it goes back to William James's famous book entitled *Pragmatism*, in which the social philosophy of meliorism was first definitely presented as a program of human betterment to be worked out through the coöperation of human and divine agencies. But when the whole of James's religious philosophy is taken into consideration there can be no question but that he was one of the precursors of the new theism. Hence it is especially significant that Wells acknowledges, in the Preface of his *God, the Invisible King*, his deep indebtedness to James. The truth is that the idea of a finite God is really only a halfway stage in the development of the new theist conception, a popular stage, as it were, with which no new theist cares to quarrel so long as it does not become arrogant and claim philosophical finality. As Professor Hocking has well said, doubtless with Wells, among others, in mind: "The finite god, sought by many a brave spirit of our own time and of other times, we have no thought of denying, neither of disputing his religious value. We have already said that polytheism has its measure of truth, as a protest against an abstract monism which becomes empty. But the value of any finite god depends on his being an aspect of the God who is not finite." [7]

[7] *Journal of Religion*, Vol. I, pp. 488*f*. It is interesting to note that the late Dr. Hastings Rashdall, who was much nearer to the new theists than to the social theologians in his general philosophy, was a strong advocate of a finite God.

And James's finite God, borrowed by Wells, was unquestionably "a protest against an abstract monism," namely, that of Hegelian absolutism, which he certainly thought had become empty.

Professor Hocking, however, is undoubtedly in the right when he implies that the idea of a finite god cannot be carried through without self-contradiction, because it makes the evil against which God fights into an independent datum over against him, as something which he did not originate, and which is in no conceivable way responsible for such being as it has to him. And this throws us back on the orthodox theologian's devil, and on a dualistic metaphysical theory like that of Persian Mazdaism, in which the conception of the devil was created and from which, via the Gnosticism of the second century of our era, it passed into orthodox conservative theology. The idea of finitude in God is a weasel idea which sucks the lifeblood out of the idea of perfection essential to the conception of deity. But this brings us face to face with the problem of evil, consideration of which must needs be postponed to a separate chapter. Now let us turn to a fuller consideration of the conception of God of the other group of social theologians.[8]

See his *Theory of Good and Evil,* Vol. II, Bk. III, Chap. i, and his essay entitled "Personality Human and Divine" in the collective volume edited by Henry Sturt, entitled *Personal Idealism.*

[8] See Bishop Francis J. McConnell's recent admirable contribution to the literature of the new theism, entitled *Is God Limited?* for a brief but pointed refutation of Wells's

Frankly identifying God with the social consciousness, Professor Ames holds that the proper approach to an understanding of the God-idea is the tracing of its origin and development. Hence he deals with the conception in strict accordance with the genetic method of the social theologians, which was expounded and criticized in Chapter II. But tracing the origin of each successive God-idea arising in the history of religion to a definite social pattern really means for Professor Ames the identification of the divine being with the social consciousness. More exactly, he conceives God as the totality of relations constituting the whole social order of growing humanity. To substantiate this viewpoint he points out the close relation between the idea of God of a certain people and their

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conception of God. He is entirely right when he says: "Mr. Wells is a fair representative of that impatient thought of to-day which rails against fundamental philosophical questions. . . . If the history of philosophy teaches anything, it teaches that the quest for unity is one of the master passions of the human mind. For metaphysics as hair-splitting refinement we may well share all the Wellsian scorn. For metaphysics as serious attempt to meet a deep-seated craving for unity we may well have thoroughgoing respect. Whether we have the respect or not, the craving is one of those irrepressible needs which will make itself heard whether we welcome it or not. Scores of thinkers of the Wells type rail at the Christian doctrine of the Trinity because that doctrine sins, they say, against the demand for unity. Mr. Wells has a duality which sins against unity without any of the theological attempts to satisfy unity. All we have for justification for this duality are Mr. Wells' fine gestures of scorn toward everything else. A large part of Mr. Wells' ability is as a maker of gestures." (Pp. 69*ff.*) Reprinted with the author's permission.

general social organization. Thus a nomadic or a hunting social group believes in and worships animal gods, a tribe of fishermen develops fish gods, and an agricultural folk create rain and grain gods. When the life of a group becomes so complicated and diversified as to include a number of separate activities, that people is certain to develop syncretized deities, that is to say, gods which combine in themselves several specific functions previously attributed to separate deities. And when social organization advances still further to the point where great human leaders, such as sheiks, patriarchs, kings, warriors, and what not, control the destinies of the people, the gods forthwith take on the characteristics of these potentates. Moreover, that God and the social consciousness are one and the same is further borne out by the fact, well known to the historian of religion, that when a race is conquered its gods become the vassals of the gods of the conquerors. Then, too, when a homogeneous group is dispersed by a more powerful rival, so that its tribal identity is lost, its god becomes a jinni, a mere ghost of its former self, or else disappears entirely and becomes a dead god.

Nor is this deifying or rather God-creating process a mere past phenomenon which is no longer active. Every social psychologist is familiar with the psychological process in present-day life which is all the time personifying lesser social groups, such as the spirit of a college as *Alma Mater*, or

the national consciousness as *Uncle Sam*, even though these personifications are not, as among primitive men, conceived of as minor deities. But we do still personify the whole social order as the one supreme God, "the Common Will idealized and magnified and presented in personal symbolism," to quote a significant characterization from Professor Ames. To-day there is in the making, here in the United States of America and elsewhere, a conception of the "democracy of God" which will ultimately supplant the essentially medieval conception of a "kingdom of God." In the words of Professor Otto: "It is inevitable . . . that America, historically the foremost exponent of the democratic 'urge' and 'outreach' of the universe, and only yesterday the leader in making the world safe for democracy, shall presently engage in the larger task of making God safe for democracy. This is the heart of the new theology. We must have a new God, for both theoretical and practical reasons, a God of the people, by the people, and for the people." And referring to the hypothesis "that there is no supernatural being of any sort that cares to, or can, assist men in the furtherance of human nature" as a step in advance of the Wellsian doctrine of a finite God, the same writer says—was it with Professors Haydon and Ames, among others, in mind? "Certain thinkers, to be sure, favor trying out this hypothesis, as various God-hypotheses have been tried out, and predict

that happy results would follow the experiment." And he adds his own declaration in favor of this view. "Nevertheless the very arguments they (the defenders of the finite God) use to prove that God is finite will go a long way towards proving either that his existence is doubtful, or that he may be left out of account." [9]

Thus this group of social theologians conceive of God as a purely immanent being, identical with the human social consciousness. The supernatural God is bowed politely out of the front door as an unwelcome guest. Transcendence is explained away. It simply expresses the tendency to put the highest human values into a unique and entirely separate sphere from all lower values such as the economic. But in reality there is no fundamental difference in quality between one value and another, and ultimately God is simply the social consciousness, the whole of humanity, the great Group Spirit, personified in popular Christianity as the Father.[10]

Now there can be no question but that this conception is far more germane to, and logically con-

[9] M. C. Otto: *Things and Ideals* (Henry Holt and Company), pp. 261, 269 and 270. Note the quotation from Haydon used as a foreword to the book, and compare A. E. Haydon: "The Theological Trend of Pragmatism" in the *American Journal of Theology,* Vol. XXIII, pp. 401-416.

[10] Aside from the references to Haydon and Otto, which were just given, the above exposition is based upon Professor Ames's important essay, entitled "The Validity of the Idea of God," *Journal of Religion,* Vol. I, pp. 462*f*. Essentially the same view is presented in his presidential address before the

sistent with, the general social philosophy of social theology than is the idea of a finite god, who is thought of as coöperating with the social consciousness without being identified with it. And in this sense it really is an advance over that view. It has been reached by consistently applying the theological method of social theology, it is the logical consequence of the social philosophy which was sketched in Chapter III, and it is precisely the conception of God to which pragmatic evolutionary naturalism would inevitably drive a logically consistent social theologian. In reality it is a continuation of the "religion of humanity" of Auguste Comte, enriched with the new ideas of meliorism.[11]

Western Branch of the American Philosophical Association, published in the *International Journal of Ethics* under the title "Religious Values and the Practical Absolute," Vol. XXXII. See also his *The New Orthodoxy*, pp. 45–53.

[11] This is admitted by Dean Shailer Matthews. Although he is strongly under the influence of social theology and, as was indicated above (see p. 30), has made significant contributions to its method, this prominent theologian refuses to follow his colleagues in consistently applying the method to the point of identifying God and the human social consciousness. He condemns all theologies which deny "the possibility of affirming the existence of objective personal elements in the universe." Concerning the conception of God as a "sort of transcendental Uncle Sam," he writes: "The fact that one may urge another to be identified with this community of social interest to which the name God has been given may serve temporarily, as did its predecessor, positivism, to stimulate refined minds, but it will not serve others. When one becomes disillusioned as to the existence of some being which corresponds to the concept God, one will lose interest in the concept and in the practices to which it leads. An empty revolver will function effectively only as long as the highwayman thinks it loaded." . . . "In the infinite universe of activity

Those social theologians who equate God with the human social consciousness rob the concept God of its specific content. And this means that their God is powerless to perform the functions of the God of the great historical monotheistic religions.

In two recently published, profound discussions Professor Hocking has subjected this interpretation of the divine nature to searching examination, and since his refutation of it is unquestionably complete and final and has not yet been answered, all that is necessary here is to summarize it.[12] Although he uses three lines of argument it will suffice to present only two of them in this connection, since the other deals with the problem of evil and will be used in developing the contrasting solutions of that problem.

The main line of Professor Hocking's argument consists in pointing out certain definite and indispensable human values, known to be due to an at-

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there is imminent an infinite Person whose existence and character account for its relationships, its tendencies, and its achievements." *The Contributions of Science to Religion,* pp. 338 and 401.

Professor William Adams Brown is another distinguished theologian, very much under the influence of social theology, who refuses to abandon theism. See his *Imperialistic Religions and the Religion of Democracy,* p. 148, note. The fact that theism actually persists in the minds of thinkers so strongly under the influence of a metaphysic which is inimical to it is evidence of its vitality.

[12] See "Is the Group Spirit Equivalent to God for all Practical Purpose?" *Journal of Religion,* Vol. I, pp. 482-497, and "The Illicit Naturalizing of Religion," *ibid.,* Vol. IV, pp. 561–589.

titude of personal worship of a transcendent God on the part of individuals, and which can by no means be produced by the relation between an individual and the social group to which he belongs, be that group even the whole of humanity. In other words, he proves conclusively that society can not do the religious work of a transcendent God. What are these unique values which man gets from worshiping a transcendent God, but can never get from identifying himself with the human social consciousness? First of all, an *inner peace*, that conscious poise and optimism in the presence of grievous wrestlings with nature which is born of religious faith and confidence in God. Such peace renders the individual worshiper immune to the fateful contingencies of everyday life. Society, just because it needs to be criticized and reformed and made nearer to the heart's desire, can never give this religious peace to its devotees. On the contrary such poise can only come from a being toward whom there can be a feeling of absolute dependence and on whom there can be steadfast reliance without criticism. Nor is such mental poise purely quiescent feeling. Releasing the individual from anxiety and too great a preoccupation with his own personal fate, it really furthers rather than hinders meliorizing efforts. But the significant fact is that here is a religious value of the widest range and moment which it is not within the power of the purely social god to create.

And secondly, *freedom*, not in any abstract, metaphysical sense, but in the concrete sense of being able to aspire and to realize one's highest aspirations, to progress and to succeed here in this mundane sphere of existence in that great business of soul-making in which every mortal is engaged. Every one is familiar with the experience of being overwhelmed with the burdening routine of life, of being bound down by the conventions and customs of a too narrow social *milieu*, indeed, of being enmeshed in and fettered by personal habits of reacting and of thinking. By such things as these man's will becomes paralyzed. The worship of the transcendent God "sets the mind free from all that is merely habitual in its own mental properties." Thus, in a higher and more comprehensive sense than play, religious worship recreates the soul of man. By leading the mind far away from itself, and from merely human groups and problems, to a reality of a higher order than any natural object, even though it be the human social consciousness itself, religious worship restores freedom and begets the initiative of the aspiring consciousness by whose power the transformations of civilization have been and must ever be made. If we would avoid becoming crystallized in our earthly peculiarities and limitations we must breathe more than the rarefied atmosphere of purely human culture. For what could contribute more than just this to the making of the race "all too human"?

And thirdly, *the meeting of minds.* As we learned in Chapter III, the social theologians assume that human minds interpenetrate and form a single unified social consciousness. But this must be more than a dogmatic assumption. In the concrete world of living men and women too often minds never meet, but separate into classes only to clash with one another in deadly combat, each class-mind being actuated by the sole purpose of utterly annihilating the opposing point of view. One class sees the issue in one way and another in an entirely different way, and they find it impossible to meet except in furious combat. Thus there are in natural human society destructive tendencies which prevent the full and complete social solidarity on which the social theologians are so insistent. How are minds—either individual minds or separate group minds—going to meet in such a way as to form a social solidarity of the whole of humanity? In the face of the widely prevalent tendency of the social consciousness of one group or class to set itself against that of another, how is a thoroughgoing unification of the social consciousness of all humanity to be achieved? Only by devotion to a superhuman being who transcends all such groups. Unless that transcendent being is already real, worshiped and known as real by mortals, the social consciousness as a fully unified solidarity is utterly inconceivable. Give men a common transcendent God beyond themselves and

their minds can meet in revering that being. The worship of God is ultimately the only human attitude which can really break down the urge of human minds toward separateness and isolation. In other words the very possibility of such a new humanity as the social theologians conceive is dependent upon the reality of a transcendent God whom men can unite in worshiping. These, then, are three supreme and abiding human, spiritual values which the worship of a transcendent God creates, but which the social god of the social theologians is powerless to produce. Now let us turn to the second line of argument.

In answer to Professor Ames's contention that the evolution of the idea of God parallels that of social organization, proving that the deity is only an idealization or personification of human society, Professor Hocking rightly points out that there is always another idea of God which runs through all social orders regardless of what the particular social pattern may be. "Even in primitive religions and from that point onward the typical situation is one in which some God of nature stands above and behind the gods directly concerned with human life. Totemistic, ancestral, tribal gods have each their own hierarchy, and at the top of the series melt into the powers of the wider cosmos. The gods which are vivid and companionable, because they are near and concrete, are felt in just

that proportion to lack something of finality." [13] Thus even in primitive religions purely immanent gods, useful in the practical affairs of everyday life, are unsatisfactory, and a transcendent God of nature must needs be added to the list of deities.

Moreover, this contrast between the immanent and the transcendent aspects of deity comes to expression in the forms of worship. In such ceremonies as the "initiation rites" among primitive people, the individual who is being initiated into the tribal customs must spend time in solitude, apart from his fellows, communing with the non-social powers of nature. In such a ceremony the group temporarily entirely suppresses itself. Hence even in primitive religion, where what anthropologists call *symbiosis*, or togetherness of the members of the group, is most complete, there is an antisocial aspect in the quasi-religious initiatory ceremonies. But when we come to the more highly developed peoples, we find that this antisocial aspect of worship is much more prominent in their religion. "We find, perhaps to our astonishment, that religion seems to have turned its back upon the whole social undertaking, not merely by sustaining a momentary retreat, as in the initiation program, but by expressly calling its followers to renounce this world and seek their treasure in quite another. . . . Had the religious consciousness not

[13] W. E. Hocking, *op. cit.*, p. 489. Compare R. Otto, *op. cit.*, pp. 133*f*.

reached this point of fixing its attention upon that which was so far outside all definite social aims as to be non-tribal, non-national, non-familial, non-political, in brief, universal, Europe could, in all probability, never have succeeded in reaching a coherent political order. An anti-social religion made modern Europe possible." [14] Thus Professor Hocking's second line of argument consists in bringing to light certain well-known facts in the history of religion which are not at all considered by Professor Ames and which point in the direction of a supersocial, transcendent God. In placing all of the emphasis upon the immanence of God and in explaining away the aspect of transcendence, the social theologians reach a conception of the divine being which cannot do the work of religion at its best. But it is now necessary to expound more systematically the new theist conception, and to explain how these thinkers relate God to the evolutionary process of which human society is one of the aspects.

As is evident from Professor Hocking's critique of Professor Ames's conception of God, the new theists are also believers in approaching the doctrine through a study of the history of religion and in applying to that history the idea of evolution or development. But in such a study they think that the theologian must follow the basic principle of interpretation, which holds regardless of the de-

[14] W. E. Hocking, *op. cit.*, pp. 491 and 493.

velopmental process under investigation, that whereas the lower can be explained by the higher, the higher can never be adequately explained by the lower—a principle which is as old as the neo-Platonist philosopher, Plotinus, but which is as true to-day as it was when he enunciated it. Guided by this principle, the new theists are naturally more interested in that stage in the evolution of the idea of God in which a pure ethical monotheism supplants a crude unethical polytheism. Or, to put it in the terminology of Professor Hocking, at that stage when the one God of nature wins out in the conflict with the deities with separate tribal functions, and becomes endowed, not simply with all of these special functions but also with the highest moral qualities. And within the circle of culture to which we belong this stage was reached twice. First by the great writing Hebrew prophets—Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. Through the powerful influence of this highly ethical, prophetic movement in ancient Judaism there was generated that sublime Old Testament piety and religiosity, which ultimately flowered so beautifully in the religion of Jesus and especially in his idea of God as a being of inexhaustible love and good-will, our Father. But a pure ethical monotheism was reached quite independently by the Greeks when the idealistic philosophers, especially Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, aided by the idealizing tendency in Greek litera-

ture, substituted the idea of one supremely good divine being for the numerous deities which made up the pantheon of popular Greek religion. Now when this philosophical conception of God of the great Greek thinkers was finally fused with the Jewish-Christian idea of the Father-God, there was produced a conception of the divine being which embodied the best elements of the two greatest streams of culture of antiquity. This process of amalgamation, which covered the early centuries of the Christian era and culminated in the Augustinian theology, is of far greater significance to the student of the origin of the Christian idea of God than is the crude religion of the Australian Bushmen, however important that may be.[15] For the former contains an idea of God which grew out of the same social and cultural environment that produced modern science and civilization, whereas the latter contains an idea of divine powers only slightly different from that of the earliest progenitors of the Semites and of the Greek and Roman peoples. To this specifically Christian doctrine of the nature of the divine being the new theists deliberately return. Their aim is to fathom the mystery of the origin of this unique monotheistic

[15] Professor A. C. McGiffert has recently published his Nathaniel William Taylor lectures on theology, originally delivered at the Yale Divinity School, in which he sketched the fascinating story of the development of the Christian conception of God in the early years of Christianity. See his *The God of the Early Christians*. Compare Dean Ralph Inge's essay in *The Legacy of Greece*.

conception of God, and to reinterpret and make it consistent with the highest attainments of modern knowledge. For they regard it as a metaphysically superior, because profounder and more logically coherent, interpretation of the cosmos and of human existence than is the evolutionary naturalism on which social theology is based, and of which it is the religious aspect.

The core of the new theist conception of God is the idea of personality. It is with this idea that they seek to grasp the essence of the nature of deity, and to harmonize the aspects of immanence and transcendence in such a way that they become complementary rather than mutually exclusive and contradictory ideas. And for an understanding of what personality is and means in the scheme of things, they go back to the historic character of Jesus of Nazareth, as his personal life stands revealed in the authentic records of the Synoptic Gospels. Here is exhibited with crystal-like clearness a superb illustration of how the whole of a human being's thoughts, desires, aspirations, activities, in a word, the total content of consciousness, can be systematically organized around a noble, unselfish purpose, and of how the way toward the realization of that holy purpose can be unflinchingly pursued through persistent persecution, through ridicule and scoffs and jeers, through woe and agony until the quest ends in death, yea, the ignominious death of the cross. To formulate for

oneself such a high moral and spiritual purpose, and to adhere to it through a pathway of opposition is what personality is. Jesus became, by virtue of his sublime purpose, and of his deeds performed to accomplish that purpose, the kind of reality God is—an ethical, spiritual, personal being. And in his philosophy of life, when it is stripped of all its excrescences and accretions and is stated in its pure simplicity, is to be found a conception of God entirely consistent with modern knowledge.

Nothing stands out more clearly in the Gospels than Jesus' sincere, sublime, and unquenchable faith in a transcendent God, his spiritual Father and the God and Father of all mankind, but especially of those who avail themselves of the opportunity to worship and to enter into fellowship with Him. To Jesus, God was a living reality, a spiritual and moral and intelligent being, plenteous in mercy, effulgent in glory, rich in gentleness. He invariably sought those situations and experiences which brought God near to him. He walked with Him in the fields, and with Him he climbed the mountain steeps. He prayed to Him all through the night in the solitude of the everlasting hills. Looking upon the beauties of nature, God's open book, he saw a splendor far surpassing the glory of Israel's golden age. "Behold the lilies of the field how they grow, they toil not, neither do they spin, and yet I say unto you that even Solomon in

all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." To him birds and beasts and the swarming multitudes of the sea were God's creatures. Apart from the will of the Father not even a sparrow falls to earth, and even the hairs of our heads are numbered.

How can such a conception of the divine being ever be reconciled with the identification of God with human society? Jesus' thought about God is utterly foreign to such an identification. Significant, indeed, is the statement in the Fourth Gospel and absolutely true to the general impression of Jesus' behavior made by the Synoptic Gospels: "Jesus did not trust himself unto them, for that he knew all men, and because he needed not that any one should bear witness concerning man, for he himself knew what was in man." Although he worked indefatigably for human welfare, he never trusted himself unto men. He knew too well the limitations of man. He put his confidence in God.

Not only did Jesus believe in a personal God, he believed also in a kingdom of God, a kingdom of redeemed and regenerated persons, a kingdom which is exalted far above the temporal mundane world—"My kingdom is not of this world." Yet he also thought of this spiritual kingdom as present like leaven in this world, permeating it through and through, "the kingdom of heaven is within you." This eternal spiritual world, which is con-

stituted by a righteous God and a great family of righteous souls, all united with one another and with God by the unbreakable cords of love and mutual good-will was as real to Jesus Christ as the stars of the firmament are real to us. His profound and indestructible belief in the reality of this ideal, spiritual community is a basic principle of his philosophy of life.

This determined for Jesus the meaning of human existence. The true goal of human development, individual and social, the only destiny worthy of one man or of all humanity, is that of intimate fellowship and conscious communion with God. Men can only be made over and can only be brought to a realization of their spiritual nature by being brought into conscious touch with the spiritual world. Once make a man conscious of his kinship to God and of his destiny to become one in purpose and aim with God and you have *ipso facto* made him a new man. "Be ye perfect even as your Father in Heaven is perfect" is Jesus' own inimitable formulation of this destiny of human beings. And it was Jesus' unalterable conviction that he ought to work for human welfare in this sense, that he ought to open the eyes of all so that they could see, as clearly as he himself saw, the spiritual world. For only by catching a glimpse of their destiny of being united in a common life with God can men, according to Jesus, find themselves and understand their world. Hence another principle

of Jesus' philosophy of life is this settled belief that the supreme duty of man is to be a laborer with God in the great task of changing natural men into saints.

Add to these principles Jesus' conception of the world of space and time and of all the elements that enter into the structure of the physical universe as a creation of God made to serve as a medium for this development of spirituality, and you will have a fairly complete sketch of his philosophy of life. The world is God's workshop, in which human beings can find themselves. "Thou hast made us for thyself and our souls are restless until they find their rest in thee," said St. Augustine, in giving expression to this deep insight of the Master into the meaning of man's temporal life. Earth is but the battle ground upon which man's spiritual struggles and moral conflicts are fought. Victorious in these conflicts and struggles, man's spirit rises into a spiritual order of existence where physical worlds are no longer necessary because physical needs no longer exist.

Now the new theists, with this philosophy of Jesus consciously in mind, conceive of God as a personal being—"*the unified totality of spiritual ethical personal life*" (Wobbermin). They hold that in our experience of being finite personalities we learn that the degree of personality we are able to attain is determined and measured by the extent to which the inner will or self is unified into

steadfastness and constancy. Hence a perfect personal being would be one whose will is absolutely unswerving, and all of whose activities are completely unified by a fixed, immutable self-determined purpose. Such a being is God. "Moral creativity in the human personality presents itself as continuous with a greater moral creativity in the universe at large. When original moral power is finding expression in us, and when we are aiding in calling forth the like in others, we most truly live, we are most real, and at the same time we are most harmoniously related to the wider reality on which we all depend." [16] God is, then, a personality with a consistent and perfectly unified ethical will, working out in time an immutable purpose.

Immanence means "that the consistent and ethical fundamental will of God pervades the world as a living force and that it determines and guarantees a meaning and purpose for the development of the world." Transcendence means "that in its nature and essence God's absolute and ethical loving will, which rules and pervades the whole world, lies infinitely beyond all the bustle and stir of the world of sense and phenomena, so that this phenomenal world cannot have any sort of real or absolute value except through its relation to

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[16] Eugene Lyman: *The Experience of God in Modern Life,* p. 43. Compare J. A. Leighton: *Religion and the Mind of Today,* Chap. xxiv.

this ethical and loving will of God." [17] So interpreted, God is both immanent and transcendent just because He is the unified totality of all ethical and spiritual personal life, that is to say, just because He is the sovereign personality of the universe. Behind and immanent in the evolutionary process—cosmic, organic, and social alike—not in the sense of a First Cause in the causal series, but in the sense of a transcendent *fons et origo* of all phenomena, is an original and unique personal being, who established as the final aim and essential purpose of this whole process the development of ethical and spiritual personalities, and the bringing of them into living and conscious communion and oneness with Himself. This is the new theists' conception of God and of His relation to the evolutionary process.

That this conception is flatly opposed to any and every exclusively mechanistic interpretation of the universe goes without saying. But this does not mean that it is in any true sense of the word an enemy of science or of the scientific spirit of delving for truth. "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" is as much the practical motto of the new theists as it is of scientists. The rather widespread assumption that monotheism is an antiquated philosophy, inimical to and inconsistent with exact scientific

[17] Georg Wobbermin: *Christian Belief in God,* pp. 145*f.* See also his *Systematische Theologie,* Bd. III, Kap. iv.

knowledge, and incompatible with the best metaphysical thought, is absolutely false. There is not even a shred of genuine evidence in its support.

On the contrary, important recent scientific investigations in the field of biology and of biological chemistry supply confirmatory evidence for this theistic conception of God and of His relation to the evolutionary process. For in his profound contributions, entitled *The Fitness of the Environment* and *The Order of Nature*, Professor L. J. Henderson, the distinguished biological chemist of Harvard University, has shown that ages before the origin of life on the earth, a preparation for its coming seems to have been made by the concentration here on the earth of just those three chemical elements—carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen—without which life would have been impossible, in such quantities as to make possible the emergence and evolution of creaturely life. And similarly Professor A. P. Matthews, in an article published in the January number (1922) of the *Yale Review* and entitled "The Road of Evolution" argues that the "struggle for freedom" is a far more significant aspect of organic evolution than the "struggle for existence." "Evolution is," he writes, "the splitting off, if I may thus put it, of an organism from its environment." In fact, this great technical scientist sees the goal of evolution to be the development of free personalities, and intimates that

the new theists' interpretation of the goal of evolution as the creation and the bringing into conscious and living communion with God of such personalities is entirely in accord with the scientist's understanding of the process.

In this connection the words of Professor Hartley B. Alexander are highly significant:

> These two great *credos* of human history, common to all expressions of the religious instinct—belief in God and belief in immortality—are, I affirm, bound to prevail upon the earth. All the teachings of history and biology, every principle of evolution, enforce this view. Races that deny these beliefs must disappear from the earth, in favor of the better adapted members of their kind. I am not maintaining any *a priori* certitude that there is a God to whom man's destiny is meaningful, nor that that destiny does not cease with this earthly life. But I do affirm that Nature decrees that the man who survives, the race that persists, must believe these things. They are a part of the equipment of the Fittest to survive.[18]

Belief in God being a biological necessity, it follows that for science to destroy such belief would be for it to destroy itself. But only pseudo-scientists think that science is destructive of religious faith. All real scientists know that nothing has been discovered anywhere in the various fields

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[18] Hartley B. Alexander: *Nature and Human Nature*, pp. 45*f*. Reprinted with the permission of the Open Court Publishing Company.

of scientific research which in any way discredits belief in God. That belief is even more rational to-day as a result of modern science than it has ever been.

Nor has theism any reason to fear metaphysics. Professor A. E. Taylor, one of the most eminent living philosophers, has recently said that the new theism is the most promising new movement in contemporary philosophy. He writes: "Mr. Russell's philosophy saves us half of Plato, and that is much, but I am convinced that it is whole and entire Plato whom a profounder philosophy would preserve for us. I believe personally that such a philosophy will be led, as Plato was in the end led, to a theistic interpretation of life, that it is in the living God Who is over all, blessed forever, that it will find the common source of fact and value." [19] That there is a growing tendency for great thinkers to take this attitude can hardly be questioned. Apropos of Mr. Russell's irreligious attitude, the words of his friend and collaborator in the writing of the *Principia Mathematica*, Dr. A. N. Whitehead, are highly significant. Defining religion as "the vision of something which stands beyond, behind, and within, the passing flux of immediate things," he continues:

[19] From *Recent Tendencies in European Thought*, C. S. Marvin, editor, p. 61. Reprinted with the permission of the Oxford University Press. Compare Bertrand Russell: "The Free Man's Worship," recently reprinted in his *Mysticism and Logic*, but to be found also in his earlier *Philosophical Essays*.

Religion has emerged into human experience mixed with the crudest fancies of barbaric imagination. Gradually, slowly, steadily, the vision recurs in history under nobler form and with clearer expression. It is the one element in human experience which persistently shows an upward trend. It fades and then recurs. But when it renews its force it recurs with an added richness and purity of content. The fact of the religious vision, and its history of persistent expansion, is our one ground for optimism. Apart from it, human life is a flash of occasional enjoyments lighting up a mass of pain and misery, a bagatelle of transient experience.[20]

Dr. Whitehead's last two sentences bring us face to face with the problem of evil. It is an advantage to be able to approach it from such a height, and with the knowledge that a theistic interpretation of ultimate reality is biologically necessary and metaphysically sound.

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20 A. N. Whitehead: *Science and the Modern World*, p. 268. Reprinted with the permission of The Macmillan Company.

Chapter V

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

IN dealing with the conception of God it was necessary to distinguish the problem of God's existence from that of His meaning in human experience, and to approach the question of an adequate conception of the divine nature from the side of meaning. And it was because an ethical, monotheistic conception of God was found to be essential, if certain basic human needs were to be met, that the reality of such a being was asserted and supported against the identifying of God with the social consciousness. A thorough analysis of evil leads to a reënforcement of that conclusion. Paradoxical though it may seem, far from being an argument against God, a deep understanding of the problems of evil will be found to be an argument for God. In very general terms this is the new theists' attitude toward evil.

The social theologians, however, use the existence of evil as the chief objection to an ethical monotheism which grounds the universe of fact and of value in a personal God. Ignoring the findings of Professor Henderson, mentioned at the

end of the last chapter, they simply deny any purpose in the cosmic evolutionary process prior to the appearance of physical life. They hold that the supposed goal of God—the creation of ethical personalities and the bringing of them into living communion with Himself—necessitates treating millions of living beings, all of those in fact who do not achieve personality, as mere means to that goal for those who are able to achieve it. Thus all animals and many human beings must mercilessly suffer in order that ethical, spiritual, personal life may be developed upon the earth. But since new theists assert God to be so perfect that He wills only the good, how can they reconcile His producing all of this evil with His goodness? Hence the mere existence of evil is an insuperable obstacle to belief in such a God as is conceived by the new theists. So the social theologians reason.

On the other hand, they claim that they themselves have no problem of evil, since in their view evil is "reduced to that part of the natural world and of human social relationships not yet brought into subjection to the intelligence and purposes of man" (Haydon). The phrase *not yet* implies that all evil ultimately will be brought into subjection to man's intelligence. In fact, it is in the process of subjugating evil that the meaning of human life is found. "With larger vision man might even find a religious enthusiasm in the

challenge of the evil of the world as a task for the growing powers of intelligent purposive life, might accept the call to devotion and self-sacrifice in the coöperative effort of man to put purpose into the world, to organize cosmic life, and to construct a world social mind embodied in institutions which will guarantee the opportunity of the complete life to all men." [1] Thus the social theologians add to the contention that the existence of evil is an insuperable obstacle to theists the claim that they themselves have no difficulty in dealing with evil. They call it a challenge to humanity's noblest efforts. They insist that it puts meaning into our lives by supplying them with a task worthy of their growing powers.

From the fact that evil puts meaning into human lives by supplying them with a task worthy of their growing powers, does it follow that there is no problem of evil? To what extent is it true that social theologians can escape this problem? Undoubtedly the denial of a transcendent God, upon whom the universe as a whole depends, saves certain social theologians from the perplexing problem of reconciling the facts of evil with the existence of such a being. And that means that they do not have the same problem of evil as the new theists. But is this equivalent to saying that they have no problem of evil whatsoever? By no

[1] A. Eustace Haydon in the *Journal of Religion,* Vol. I, pp. 105*f*.

means. For no thinker can hope to avoid all of the difficulties arising from the fact of evil. Indeed about all any one can do is to choose that solution which seems to him to entail the least amount of irrationality. Perhaps the real situation which confronts thinkers can best be expressed in a dilemma which at least has the value of suggesting that every reflective mind must approach this great problem with a certain humility. If we affirm the reality of the Eternal Goodness we must reconcile His existence with the empirical facts of evil, but if we deny the existence of such a transcendent God we earthborn mortals must find a way of getting rid of evil by our own coöperative efforts, unaided by any "Power not ourselves which works for righteousness." Intelligent recognition of and dumb resignation to our human lot is doubtless a way of escaping between the horns of this dilemma, but it is really an admission that human values have no durability in the universe and that all the bustle and stir of human activity is at most only of relatively transitory significance. The new theists, accepting the first horn of the dilemma, do what they can to reconcile the conception of God with the facts of evil.[2] The social theologians, accepting the second

[2] It must be frankly admitted that most of the new theists ingenuously confess that in the end only God knows how to make the reconciliation in detail. All that human beings can grasp is the principle by which the reconciliation may be effected.

horn, have to show how human existence can be worth while, confined within a meaningless cosmic process out of which it evolved, and whose perpetual restlessness and impermanence it forever shares.

To carry the analysis further, there are at least four unavoidable problems of evil. One is that of its origin. This is an especially perplexing problem because the derivation of it from any source seems to brand that particular source as a kind of devil. Another problem is that of its nature. How is evil to be defined? What in an entity makes it an evil? The answer to this question is determined by one's theory of value. A third problem is that of the meaning or function of evil in human experience. Does it do any good? Does it serve any purpose whatsoever? And the fourth problem, which some one has facetiously remarked is really the only problem, is how to get rid of it. By what methods can evil be eradicated from human experience? Or, if it cannot be entirely eliminated, how can human suffering be alleviated and how can evil be made endurable to rational beings?

There is really no escaping these problems. They must all be faced by any thinker who seeks an understanding of evil. They are inextricably interwoven, and the answer given to them is almost certain to be determined by a more or less explicit metaphysical theory. Hence no one can truthfully

say that all of these problems are avoided by non-theists. The traditional theological problem of evil, which is that of reconciling evil with God, is supposed to arise for theists from the fact that they make absolutely every event which happens dependent upon the will of God. And this traditional theological problem is often spoken of as though it were the only problem of evil. By this linguistic device some thinkers deceive themselves and their followers into thinking that theists have an insoluble problem, whereas no non-theist has any problem of evil at all. And they actually take comfort from the fact that their agnosticism or atheism saves them from having to wrestle with the problem which confronts the theist! Perhaps it does, but it by no means saves them from the necessity of intelligently facing the four problems just mentioned.

The metaphysical theory underlying the solutions of the problems of evil of social theology is known as evolutionary naturalism, but, as has already been mentioned, it is that special form of evolutionary naturalism which goes by the name of pragmatism. Although it underlies the meliorist's theory of value, which was discussed in Chapter III, it will be well briefly to summarize it again.

1. A perpetually changing cosmic process, of infinite duration, that is, with neither beginning nor end, long has been and still is differentiating

itself into the concrete facts collectively known as nature.

2. Already various levels of the evolving process have gradually emerged from an originally simple and undifferentiated energy, among which may be distinguished, (*a*) the elements and all that constitutes organic nature, (*b*) life of the biological or psycho-physical type known on the earth, (*c*) and organized society, social consciousness or creative intelligence as manifested in civilized communities. But, since these various levels all gradually emerge out of the original cosmic process, they are continuous with it and represent higher stages in its unfolding.

3. After creative intelligence emerged it began to give its character of order and harmony to the two lower levels. As a result of this activity ultimately the whole cosmic process will become subject to the control of intelligence. In fact, pragmatists, as distinct from naturalists, simply identify the evolutionary process with creative experience or intelligence. This implies an age-long series of increasingly better stages in the evolutionary process as creative intelligence gets fuller and fuller control over the brute forces of the original cosmic process.

4. There is no reality other than this evolving natural process. There is no transcendent, non-temporal, spiritual reality on which the process depends and from which it gets its meaning.

There is no intelligence or purpose in the universe other than that which we know in living beings. Whatever value, whatever meaning there is comes from creative intelligence in the pragmatist sense.

5. The above propositions are to be regarded as the only rational interpretation of the facts of growth and development in the universe as exhibited in such sciences as geology, biology, psychology and sociology. Hence this inductive, scientific philosophy, reached by synthesizing the actual facts of evolution, will eventually supplant the traditional speculative type of metaphysics.

In spite of the fact that it calls itself scientific there is really not sufficient inductive evidence to prove any one of the propositions which constitute the pragmatist type of evolutionary naturalism. It is equally as metaphysical and speculative as any other philosophy. In truth, it is the lineal descendant of that naturalistic philosophy which, in various forms, has for centuries been the deadliest enemy of Christian theism, as well as of all other spiritual interpretations of reality. Yet the social theologians have adopted its basic assumptions *in toto*, and they are making an honest and sincere effort to conserve the truths of the Christian religion by restating them in terms of this naturalistic philosophy. To the future historian of our era it will surely be a matter of wonder that one of our leading schools of theology should have allied itself with a dogmatic meta-

physics, which is so intrinsically hostile to every form of belief in a transcendent spiritual reality, and which logically forces its adherents to an illicit naturalizing of religion. But the explanation of this fact is not far to seek. For the social theologians have such an inherent dislike for sustained philosophical reflection, and delight so much in having "folded the silken wings of metaphysics," that they are just the kind of thinkers who are most likely to become the victims of a philosophy which boasts of being scientific and of having abandoned the purely speculative method of traditional philosophy.

The solutions offered by the social theologians to the four problems of evil follow directly from these philosophical assumptions, and from the theory of value which was expounded in some detail in Chapter III. Eschewing all questions of origin, they refuse to say whence evil came into the world and content themselves with reducing it to that part of the universe over which human intelligence has not yet extended its control. Nevertheless, it follows from the above metaphysical theory that evil is either the product of the original cosmic process or of the creative intelligence which emerged from that process. It can have no other source since this process is so defined as to make it inclusive of every fact in the universe. Their theory of the nature of evil follows from the dual theory of value, according

to which good, or value, is either what satisfies a desire or what harmonizes desires. Hence evil is unsatisfied or thwarted desires, and it is also all discord and conflict among desires. But both types of evil are admitted to serve a function in the moral economy. They set a task for the growing powers of creative intelligence, and that task is the dual one of adjusting conflicting interests and of increasing the production of things which will satisfy human desires. The goal of this process will be the development of such a unitary and single-minded social whole that every human being will be able to live the complete life. In other words, the goal is a completely socialized world. The details of how this goal is to be reached are not revealed, but generally speaking it is to be done by creative intelligence fusing all human races into an absolutely unified group, which will wrest from the natural environment full satisfaction for every human need. Briefly stated, these are the answers of social theologians to the four great problems set for men by the facts of evil in the world. How far are they tenable?

With much of this attitude toward evil every modern man will be in full sympathy. We all believe in the power of knowledge of the natural world to transform conditions of life. We live in an age when Francis Bacon's famous maxim that "knowledge is power," and his accompanying prediction that a fuller understanding of nature

would transform human society, have been amply justified. And every modern man believes in extending this knowledge until all the resources of the planetary system which it is possible for men to harness can be made to further the enrichment of human civilization. Man should have confidence in his own intelligence and he should follow where its gleam leads the way. The races of men must be unified. Social maladjustments must be righted and brotherly love enthroned in all of the relationships of life. Christianity will never cease to demand social justice. Moreover, the social theologians are right in seeking a meaning in evil. It should be a challenge to us and call out our most heroic efforts. The successes already won in the fight against evil fully demonstrate that scientific knowledge is able to eradicate a great many of the evils which have weighed down man's spirit through untold generations. In every attack on existing evils new theists will join and to the enterprise of eradicating them they will give their blessing, for they are not blind advocates of the *status quo*. By all means let us all cooperate in mastering nature, in building the fairest possible civilization on this our planet and in extending its blessings to every human being. And while human life lasts may the time never come when serious-minded men will refuse to sink their selfish interests in the ceaseless warfare against whatever evils there are!

Yet it must not be overlooked that the social theologians' attitude toward evil is fraught with very serious difficulties. And perhaps the best approach to a sympathetic understanding of the new theists' attempts to reconcile evil with God is to be found in an examination of these difficulties.

There is a very serious difficulty in their attitude of agnosticism toward the problem of the origin or source of evil. To say that the placing of the responsibility for it is a task utterly beyond human power is in fact an admission that this problem is for them insoluble. Hence it is fair to say that theists are not any worse off in this matter than are the social theologians. In fact, when the issue is pressed, theists will be found not to be as badly off. For social theologians are forced, by their very denial of a transcendent God, either to attribute evil to creative intelligence or to the cosmic process out of which creative intelligence emerged. May it not be that it is for this reason that they seek a third alternative and take refuge in agnosticism? Since their attacks on theism are based on the assumption that the ultimate source of evil is unfit to worship, to attribute evil either to creative intelligence or to the cosmic process would be an admission that neither is fit to be worshiped, and this would throw the social theologians back on a purely atheistic position. To save the religion of hu-

manity it would seem that they must by all means avoid imputing evil to mankind.

Yet their definition of evil as unsatisfied desire and as discord among desires really makes it absolutely necessary to locate evil within that part of the evolutionary process in which desires are present. And that could only be in living things and most especially in man. Thus, according to their own theory of value, the only place evil can possibly exist is in living beings. Now how can evil have its locus in man and he be held entirely guiltless? At least the discord type of evil is merely a warfare among desires. Yet desires are the very essence of human nature. They are that part of human nature which gives it its driving power. So that whether man is the creator of desires or not, they are at least the creators of the discord among themselves, and thus men, or at least their desires, become responsible for some evil on this theory. And if desires produce the discord, either desires must be held to be entirely apart from creative intelligence or it becomes a sharer in their guilt. But how could it have power enough over them to bring them together, if they are entirely separate from it? And how could it be creative without the driving power of desire? The root fallacy in this whole theory of value, as was pointed out in the chapter on social philosophy, is the divorce between intelligence and desire. This distinction is one which psycholo-

gists are already abandoning. The human being is not a congeries of isolated desires on the one hand and an abstract intelligence on the other. He acts as a unit and his whole being is implicated in every bit of his conduct. When that conduct is bad, when it leads to bad consequences, when it awakens desires that are insatiable, guilt is fixed upon him from whom it issues. Hence the conclusion that man is the author of some evil is unavoidable. He may not be responsible for all evil, but he is responsible for the worst of all evil, and that is sin or moral evil. The blame for social injustice and for individual immorality, or sin in the narrower sense, rests and can only rest on humanity.[3] And we have already shown that it is precisely upon this rock that the religion of humanity is shipwrecked. The social whole is itself too all-fired evil to serve as a substitute for God. We must go beyond humanity to find a being who can rescue men from the worst of all evil—moral delinquency. Man cannot save himself from his own guilt and sinfulness.

Another equally serious difficulty in the attitude of the social theologians comes to light when we inquire for specific details as to how fighting the world's evils is to give a meaning to the life of an

[3] See W. E. Hocking: *Human Nature and Its Remaking,* pp. 87-144, for a detailed discussion of the nature of sin, why men sin and the function of sin in the molding of human character. Note especially the unavoidable dilemmas in which a man is placed when he is called upon to act, pp. 128–136.

obscure, individual warrior. That he may find a meaning in the conflict new theists are not disposed to deny. But they are inclined to question whether fighting evil can give a meaning that is of very much importance, if the world, in its details and in its totality, is nothing but an ever shifting evolutionary process. In the first place, the social theologians do not make it clear whether the meaning comes from the warrior's consciousness that he is helping to create the completely socialized world of the remote future, or from his knowledge that he is assisting in ushering in the better world which will be the next successor of our present admittedly imperfect social order, or from the fact that there is a kind of burying of one's troubles just in fighting a good fight. Is not this question of the source of the meaning men are supposed to get out of fighting evil itself a problem of the greatest significance, and one toward which it is simply fatal for the social theologians to take an agnostic or an equivocal position? Here is at least one problem of origin which they hardly dare eschew.

Yet this difficulty with regard to the source of the meaning is as nothing compared with the one which must now be raised with regard to its durability. For when we take into consideration their implicit doctrine that the social intelligence has already produced social order after social order and is destined to continue to produce new ones

through an indefinite, yea, an endless future; when we remember that each of these begins to die at the moment it is created and a new one begins to come into existence; when we remember that nothing endures, that all is flux, that the creative intelligence which produced us and our day and generation is already producing another order of things which will push us off the stage of its creative activity—when we take all of these facts into consideration what becomes of the meaning we are supposed to find in fighting evil? At most it would be like the fitful dream of a summer's night. It could have no permanence in so dynamic a world that nothing, absolutely nothing, abides. Thus the meaning the social theologians think can be found in fighting evil turns out to be a mere chimera. Before one can even discover what it is it will have begun to vanish among the nonentities of the past. Even one's desire to fight evil, after its satisfaction is secured, must die and a new one take its place. Where, then, is the meaning which men find in fighting evil?

Nor can we forbear pointing out the unparalleled paradoxical situation in which the social theologians become involved in trying to find a meaning for human life within the cosmic process. All existing social orders are permeated with evil. These men are downright pessimists with regard to the social order now extant. They call it a "sorry state of affairs." But they fondly dream

of one to come which will be free from the defects of the present. Hence they are extreme optimists with regard to the next successor of the present social order to be created by social intelligence. But since their theory involves an infinitely extended process of melioration, the next world in the infinite series of increasingly better worlds would and could be only slightly better than this. Then why condemn this social order in which we now live as a sorry state of affairs? Why talk about making a world which will "redeem man from baseness and misery?" If this present world belongs in an infinite value-series next to the better world which they propose to make, why be so pessimistic about this world and so optimistic about its next successor? Either this world is not so bad after all or else the assumed better one human intelligence is now making will not be so glorious as they think. How can the next successor to the world in which man is wallowing in a slough of rottenness be one in which man will be redeemed from baseness and misery?

Consider again in this connection the fact that in the infinite evolutionary process, in which the creative social intelligence generates the successive worlds of this infinite value-series, the next successor to this world must drop out just as they insist that this one must drop out to make room for it. It is not to be allowed to remain any longer than this. Both are transitory phases of an onward

moving process. Then again we must ask: How can the next successor be much better than this world? In any case how can it be enough better to justify the direst of pessimism for this world and the rosiest of optimism for it? It will only differ in degree, not in kind, from this world. Like this it will be transitory. And it will be a world in which all desires will not be satisfied and in which complete adjustment of desires will not exist. In fact, in an infinite process of melioration one stage cannot be much nearer completeness of adjustment and socialization than the one next to it. It would seem, then, that to avoid self-contradiction social theologians must either give up their pessimism about the present social order or their optimism about its next successor.

This leads us back to the difficulty in the conception of the end being progress with which we dealt in Chapter III. Have the social theologians any proof for the tacit assumption that the creative activity of social consciousness will persist forever and reach increasingly perfect stages? Yet, if this assumption is unfounded, what becomes of the optimism which is built upon it, and of the enthusiasm with which we enlist in the fight against evil? It is, however, unquestionably a very generous assumption to make in the face of the quite generally accepted teaching of astronomy that the earth is a second-class planet of a second-class sun, both of which are in a comparatively late

stage of their evolution and destined to move on to an end which will bring dire disaster to the human race and to all its institutions. To use again the words of Professor Haydon, what if we human beings do "construct a world social mind embodied in institutions which will guarantee the opportunity of the complete life to all men" when the scientific facts of cosmic evolution, as taught in the science of astronomy, tell us with unmistakable clearness that the earth will ultimately disintegrate and its gases be scattered to the ends of the heavens? If there is no purpose until human beings create it, if by chance the cosmic process has evolved an earth and peopled it with living inhabitants, then by the same chance will not that intelligent race of beings be transformed again into the gaseous mass into which astronomy teaches old earth is eventually to evolve, whilst the cosmic process reels on its pathless and purposeless career, utterly oblivious of the fair child which it mothered only to devour? Here is an eventuality which has brought pitiful despair to full many a valiant warrior against the forces of evil who has envisaged the whole of reality as a cosmic process. Indeed, it was precisely because theism is a philosophy of promise that William James preferred it to evolutionary naturalism.[4]

It is when they attempt to meet this particular difficulty in their theory that we get a sample of

[4] See *Pragmatism,* Chap. iii.

the friendliness of social theologians for science. For it is then that they begin to talk about the cosmos being socially determined, as though the whole cosmic process were identical with creative intelligence. And if the concepts of astronomy conflict with the concepts of social science, if astronomy tells us that the earth will disintegrate whereas social science tells us that man's only hope is to be found in the idea that it will not disintegrate, then the concept of social science must be allowed to take precedence over the concept of astronomy. For "science is for life, not life for science," and hence whenever science tells men something inimical to life, they have a right to reject it in favor of what they need to believe in order to live![5] Essentially the same argument might be used to justify believing in God, only it would not then be necessary to take a definite stand against the teachings of astronomy, since he who is convinced of the reality of God can believe that the values of human civilization will be conserved in Him when old earth goes home. Yet is it not most interesting to find social theologians forced in the long run to admit that they live by faith and not by sight? They do not know that intelligence will continue endlessly in its creative activity, but their efforts for human betterment are really meaningless unless they can assure themselves that it will, and so in the face of the

[5] See M. C. Otto: *Things and Ideals,* pp. 217*ff.*

teaching of astronomy to the contrary they make the leap of faith and boldly affirm that the social consciousness evolved here on the earth is eternal! How much more reasonable it would be to affirm the reality of God!

More reasonable because, in addition to making possible a friendlier attitude toward physical science, it would enable them to avoid a serious defect in their answer to the problem of how to get rid of evil in human experience. For the conclusion of the whole matter is that there are some evils which are undoubtedly impervious to all human attacks and, just because they cannot be eliminated, must be endured, yes, and with equanimity and good cheer unless our fighting spirit is to lose most of its edge. Let it be admitted that we should avoid dogmatizing to the extent of saying that any particular type of social evil is irremediable. Men must not be restricted in any way in their ceaseless warfare against specific social injustices and abuses. For example, the militarists' theory that war is inevitable and that those who spend themselves trying to eradicate it from human society are blinded idealists, is absolutely untenable. Who knows whether a specific existing evil in human society can be eradicated until all the energies of mankind are fully brought to bear upon it? But while we dare not tie the hands of enthusiastic warriors for human betterment with the dogma that specific social evils, such

as war and poverty and disease, are irremediable, nevertheless it must be obvious from the previous discussion that there are some evils which are bound to recur while man is man. Our finite nature makes it impossible to avoid experiencing again and again our limitations, and this recurring experience will always be recognized by intelligent people as pointing to human imperfections. In spite of all that has been accomplished in humanity's age-long struggle, the words of Dr. L. P. Jacks are unquestionably true: "The fact of evil is no discovery of the present age; it has been challenging the faith of men for thousands of years, and there is nothing more poignant to be said about it today than was said ages ago by the patriarch Job. The great troubles have not changed. Suffering and death, the agony of bereavement, the tragedies of blighted hopes and shipwrecked lives—these are not things peculiar to the twentieth century. . . . A broken heart is the same in one age, in one place, as in another; and wherever it exists the soul of man has all that it can bear." [6]

The failure of the social theologians to recognize the crying need men have in the presence of such evils as are known to be beyond their own or any human power to eliminate or to minimize is the supreme defect in their attitude toward evil.

[6] L. P. Jacks: *Religious Perplexities* (George H. Doran Company), p. 42.

Here their theory of fighting evil becomes utterly meaningless. What man needs when he meets such evils, what he absolutely must have if he is to avoid yielding permanently to an attitude of cynical despair or to that of apathetic indifference at whatever happens, is the living conviction that there is a supremely perfect being in the universe, forth from the worship of whom he may go with uplifted head and dauntless courage to renew the relentless warfare of human existence. Precisely because there are evils in human experience, the meaning of which is beyond our knowledge, ethical monotheism is the only secure refuge for rational beings. Professor Alexander's assertion that no race can survive without believing in God undoubtedly rests upon just this fact. And did we not find Dr. Whitehead saying that the religious vision is "our one ground for optimism"?

The discussion of the crowning difficulty in the social theologians' attitude toward evil has thus led directly to the new theists' position. Assuming the essential postulates of an idealistic metaphysics, according to which the world of sense and phenomena known in perception is made to depend upon an over-world of eternal spiritual values the essence of which is the omnipotent God, their answers to the four problems of evil with which every thinker is confronted may be briefly summarized. Although social theologians and other critics of monotheism seek to force the new

theists to hold God directly responsible for evil, and then use this to condemn God as a devil, the new theists really find the source of evil in the ephemeral world of sense. They treat it as a necessary aspect of creaturely life in a space-time, physico-chemical world. It is not an insoluble substance. Indeed it is made out of precisely the same stuff which enters into the making of all mundane good. It has no substantial reality over against God. It belongs to a lower level of reality which is continually vanishing. Yet it has a meaning. It serves a purpose. In the words of the poet Keats, temporal existence is "the vale of soul-making," and the function which the evils experienced by man serve is that of bringing him to a full consciousness that his real home is not in Time but in Eternity. On such a view evil may be held to be essentially unreal to God but real to living beings. Yet they may find it turning into good, working together for good, by reason of the contribution it makes to personality. Thus in the fire of God's holy purpose of creating here in the "vale of soul-making" imperishable personalities, and of bringing them into union with Himself, all the evils of finite existence are held to be utterly consumed. This is the way new theists meet the problem of how to get rid of evil. It is transmuted into the highest conceivable good.[7]

[7] See J. A. Leighton: *Man and the Cosmos,* Chap. xxxviii, and W. E. Hocking: *The Meaning of God in Human Experi-*

In support of their position, new theists point to those evils in human experience which are definitely known to be the mediators of good. To the difficulties which steel the will and awaken courage, to the abuses in society which stir men to sacrificial deeds, to the sorrows which heighten faith in the profound spiritual meaning of the universe and induce philanthropies of incalculable benefit to humanity, to the Cross of Calvary which flowered in the Gospel of a new hope for man—to all concrete evils which are known to be transmuted in a higher experience of good the new theists point. For if in the actual life of humanity such evils have really aided in creating a nobler type of character, if in earthly social orders famine or pestilence or the scourge of war has ever actually been effective in lifting the people from a low level of sensual enjoyment to a cultural plane of a higher order than they have known before, is not the new theist justified in believing that absolutely all the world's evils are transmuted in the experience of God? If we, with our finite and limited outlook upon the defiant world are able to see a meaning in some of its evils, may we not argue *a fortiori* that a being, such as God is conceived by the new theists to be, would find a meaning in absolutely all of these evils? And this

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ence, pp. 217-226. Compare B. Bosanquet: *Some Suggestions in Ethics,* Chap. v, and *The Value and Destiny of the Individual,* Lecture III.

argument is greatly strengthened by the empirical fact that it is precisely the noblest, the widest-visioned, and the most highly intelligent human beings in whom this insight into the meaning of evil is most constant and habitual.

The unescapable fact that evil is often overcome in human experience by being transmuted into good has recently been used by the distinguished classical scholar, Professor Gilbert Murray, to explain the secret of Homer. He describes the army before Troy, worn-out, half-beaten, camped in a dangerous location, with the leaders quarreling, with gross superstition rampant, with plunder rife, with the human slaves of the wretched warriors twofold more miserable than their masters, scourged by a plague which struck low scores of dogs and mules and slaves and warriors, making funeral fires a daily necessity. And then he tells us how this terrible reality has been transmuted into a scene beautiful beyond compare by the poetic imagination of the matchless Greek bard. With the rare insight born of an almost unparalleled knowledge of ancient Greek life, Professor Murray writes:

> The values of poetry, like the values of religion, are utterly different from those of everyday life. This evil time, this crowded hour of intense living, has paid back in the memory of the human race far more than it ever destroyed. The wealthy and rather servile Minoan empires lasted for many centuries and were utterly

forgotten until the spade of Sir Arthur Evans began to turn up the relics of them. But this "Heroic Age," which lasted at most about four generations, lives on forever. All the higher Greek poetry of after times was placed in it, and the higher poetry of the later world has followed where Greek poetry led. It was like the outbreak of a vast fire which consumed the slow work of many generations, a time of concentrated striving, of daring and of suffering, with almost everything about it evil except one thing—the intense demand it made upon the forces of human nature and the triumphant courage with which human nature rose to meet the demand. First, men who lived intensely, battled bravely, were in some way clean and loyal, and faced death or life with a smile upon their lips. Then, for generations afterward, later men who revered the memory of these first, who cherished their great deeds, kept alive all that was beautiful about them, forgot nearly all that was unworthy, and gave the whole power that was in them to the task of remembering and transmuting to poetry something which they felt to be greater than themselves. That seems to be one part, though of course only one, of the secret which has made the Homeric poems great. It gave at least the atmosphere in which great poetry might be born and live.[5]

Not only do these words of Professor Murray bear witness to the fact that the direst of human evils have actually been transmuted into good, they also suggest that it is not a cringing and whining attitude in the presence of evil, nor yet a bowing of the knee in abject servility to the

[5] The *Saturday Review of Literature*, Vol. I, p. 242.

pleasures and comforts of wealth and ease which makes a people great. On the contrary, it is the resolute will to make the good everlastingly prevail over the evil that exalts human character and builds worthy social orders. In its doctrine that the good-will and strenuous endeavor of man can transmute evil and make it work together for good the new theism has a way of meeting the problem set for it by the presence in the world of concrete evils.

Add to this the testimony of the mystics, those who have most persistently cultivated and perfected the fine art of worship. For, as Professor Hocking has suggested, the ultimate and highest value of the worship of a transcendent God is that it gives the key to the solution of the problem of evil. Basing his judgment on a lifelong study of the writings of the great mystics, he points out that the mystic experience of oneness with God consumes all evils in the fire of its blessedness, and that all the mystics find pain and suffering to be necessary as purgatives of the soul in preparation for the beatific vision. Francis Thompson, one of the greatest of the mystics among the British poets, describes in *The Hound of Heaven* how the bitter experiences through which he had passed came finally to be understood as God's way of pursuing him and of bringing him to a consciousness of his profound need of taking refuge in the Infinite Love.

Now of that long pursuit
Comes on at hand the bruit;
That Voice is round me like a bursting sea:
And is thy earth so marred,
Shattered in shard on shard?
Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me!
Strange, piteous, futile thing!
Wherefore should any set thee love apart?
Seeing none but I makes much of naught" (He said),
"And human love needs human meriting:
How hast thou merited—
Of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot?
Alack, thou knowest not
How little worthy of any love thou art!
Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,
Save Me, save only Me?
All which I took from thee I did but take,
Not for thy harms,
But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.
All which thy child's mistake
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home:
Rise, clasp My hand, and come!"
Halts by me that footfall:
Is my gloom, after all,
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?
"Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,
I am He Whom thou seekest!
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me."

May we not have here the ultimate clue to the mystery of evil? May not all that is suffered in the vale of Time be regarded as for the express purpose of revealing the ineffable glory of the mountain peak of Eternity? Evils may really be the hounds of heaven which drive men home to

God. Even those capricious and wayward facts of circumstance, which we in our finitude cannot understand, may be known to Him in whose mind are all our times. Just as many evils are transmuted in our own personal experience, so all evils may be transmuted in the experience of God, an experience which mysticism and prayer and worship prove that mortals may share.

To be sure this is analogical reasoning and it shares the defects of analogical reasoning. It may be retorted that God's ways are not our ways and that His thoughts are not our thoughts. Hence the new theists may be the victims of the subtle fallacy of drawing a false analogy when they argue from the fact that some evils are transmuted in human experience to the generalization that all evils are transmuted in the experience of God. Now it must be frankly admitted that the new theists do not claim to know how each and every specific evil is transmuted in God's experience. They are content to believe that each is without asking to know how. For them God's knowledge transcends the limited insights of mortals. And such knowledge as human beings have attained of the divine being does not constitute a complete vision of reality such as that being must possess. In religious experience one may know God as a personal being without thereby knowing all that He knows in the way that He knows it. Thus every new theist frankly admits

his ignorance of what the meaning of many evils is. After applying the principle of transmutation there remain specific evils which are impenetrable mysteries. Baron von Hugel is exactly right when he says:

> Christianity has not explained suffering and evil; no one has done so, no one can do so. Yet it has done two things greater, more profound and more profitable for us. From the first it has immensely widened and deepened the fact, the reality, the awful potency and baffling mystery of sorrow, pain, sin, things which abide with man across the ages. But Christianity has also, from the first, increased the capacity, the wondrous secret and force, which issues in a practical, living, loving transcendence, utilization, transformation of sorrow and pain and even of sin. Christianity gave to our souls the strength and the faith to grasp life's nettle.[9]

The faith to grasp life's nettle! Who dares face the fateful contingencies of human existence without such a faith? While evil retains its potency to engender in men's minds reflection upon its meaning ethical monotheism will not perish from the earth. Yet there have always been and there probably always will be great souls who prefer agnosticism to such a faith. And it must be frankly admitted that there is something supremely admirable in the intellectual honesty and the courageous self-reliance in which agnosti-

[9] Quoted by L. P. Jacks: *Religious Perplexities*, p. 40. Reprinted here by permission from Baron von Hugel's *Essays and Addresses* (E. P. Dutton and Company), pp. 111*f*.

cism is rooted. If there be a God who includes all human persons within His own infinite personality, He must certainly include some who doubt His existence. For among the world's most illustrious persons are numbered some agnostics. How can one condemn a man who, after thinking the matter carefully through, is honest enough to write: "Whether there be in fact a personal God or not, it seems to me we have no good reason to believe in the existence of such a being?" This is the attitude of a small minority of the most distinguished philosophers of our day. Religiously-minded people must face this fact.

Why do these philosophers take this position? I believe that it is because they are committed to an interpretation of reality which they know to be in contradiction with the theistic interpretation. But is there a good reason for believing that their philosophy is true? If one takes the theistic position there certainly is not. In the strict scientific sense of the word no metaphysical theory of the universe is demonstrable. Hence it is just as true to say that we have no good reason to believe the evolutionary naturalism which underlies agnosticism as it is to say that we have no good reason to believe in the existence of a personal God.

The truth, then, is that agnosticism on this matter is deceptive. It appears to be neutral as regards metaphysics, but in reality it rests upon

the acceptance of a metaphysic which is incompatible with theism. And this acceptance involves an act of belief just as much as the acceptance of theism implies such an act. Whether there be a personal God or not we may not know, but whether the ceaseless change called nature is ultimate or not we know just as little. To assert that the infinite activity of nature is ultimately the only reality makes it impossible to assert that God is, and vice versa. A thoroughgoing skeptic would be forced to admit that we have just as good reason for making the one assertion as we have for making the other. But such logically irrefutable skepticism is not agnosticism. On the contrary, the latter is an attitude which depends upon the prior dogma of naturalism, and it is because it has already assumed nature to be ultimate that it says we have no good reason for believing in the existence of a personal God.

Chapter VI

THE DOCTRINE OF FUTURE LIFE

TO what doctrine of future life can a Christian, who accepts modern knowledge, cling? Among the various forms of this belief known to the historian, which is the true interpretation? Indeed is any one of them more true than the others? Does each express the transitory social pattern which produced it, and view future existence as a glorification and idealized form of the general type of social order created by that social pattern? Or, on the other hand, is there an essential Christian doctrine of future life, which, like monotheism and the moral theory of the atonement, cuts across all social patterns and expresses the highest insight of the Christian consciousness as it has persisted through the ages? These are most difficult questions, and doubtless no definitive answer can be given to all of them. But in order to bring to light the similarities and differences between the social theologians and the new theists on this doctrine, it is necessary to roll away the stone from the nest of these wriggling perplexities.

One interesting and far-reaching question is

that of the origin of belief in future life. That the belief is well-nigh universal is generally admitted. Some form of it is to be found in every important religion, extinct and living, which is known to the historian. However, we are here primarily interested in the Christian form of the doctrine which originated among the Jews in Palestine and which has had a devious and checkered career. All scholars agree that it gradually grew out of the piety of devout Jews, for it first came to expression along with that piety in the Psalms and in the Book of Job. But within the canonical books of the Old Testament there is evidence of a long struggle between the pure ethical monotheism of the great prophets and the crude and barbarous ideas of future existence of the Canaanite settlers whom the Semites found in possession of the land when they entered it at the end of their nomadic wanderings. Consequently, in their efforts to purify the religion of Jahweh from its Canaanitish glosses the early prophets emphasized the doctrine of God's moral dealings with men here on earth almost to the exclusion of the idea of future life. Still that doctrine grew and it finally came to full recognition in the non-canonical apocalyptic literature of the Jews, which dates mainly from the second and first centuries B.C. This period was one in which the Palestinian Jews were in close contact with the Samaritans and Persians, so that scholars are

agreed that some of the elements of the doctrine of future life expressed in this apocalyptic literature owe their origin to these two cultures. Moreover, there is conclusive evidence that Greek ideas influenced the developing Jewish conception, especially as it was expressed in the noncanonical wisdom literature, before the advent of Christianity. And after that time it is a well-attested fact that the Greek philosophers, notably Plato, exerted a determining influence on the Christian doctrine of future life, especially as it was expressed by St. Paul, in the Johannine literature and in the Alexandrian theology. St. Augustine carried the process of amalgamating the Greek and Jewish-Christian conceptions of future existence still further. Thus we have in the origin and growth of this important doctrine of Christianity a development analogous to that of Christian monotheism, which was sketched in Chapter IV. In its final form in ancient thought it represents a fusion of Jewish, Samaritan, Christian, and Greek thought, with a considerable admixture of Zoroastrianism.[1]

[1] The extent to which Zoroastrianism influenced the Jewish-Christian eschatology is a moot question among scholars, and it is to be hoped that archæological investigations now in progress may throw new light on it. But all of the authorities agree that the religion of Zoroaster exercised some influence on Judaism, and that its influence was greatest on the eschatology of the apocalyptic literature. See the articles entitled "Eschatology," "Future Life," "Parsiism in Judaism," and "Zoroastrianism" in Hastings' *Encyclopedia of Religion and*

To prepare the way for a consideration of the modern Christian idea of future life it is highly important to distinguish, and briefly to explain, some of these strands which entered into the making of the doctrine as held by the early Christians. And in the first place, the idea of immortality has to be carefully differentiated from the idea of bodily resurrection. Some scholars think that the former is chronologically prior to the latter. In the Psalms and in the Book of Job there are expressions of belief in immortality, but not until the Book of Daniel, which was written about two centuries later, does the idea of bodily resurrection appear. The idea of immortality is a spiritual conception which originated in personal piety. The worshiper reaches the insight that his experience of God points to the reality of a purely spiritual and supermundane world, and that the being with whom he finds himself in conscious communion is able to save him from death and to give him a place in that spiritual order. Thus Job cries out to Bildad: "I know that my redeemer liveth, and at last he will stand up upon the earth; and after my skin, even this body, is destroyed then without my flesh shall I see God, whom I, even I, shall see for myself, and mine

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Ethics; R. G. Macintyre: *The Other Side of Death,* Chap. iii, and Pringle-Pattison: *The Idea of Immortality,* Chap. i.

Eschatology is the technical word used by theologians to refer to doctrines of future life. It is derived from Greek and means literally the doctrine of the last things.

eyes shall behold and not as a stranger" (Job xix, 25). Although scholars differ as to the correct interpretation of this famous passage, some trying to read the idea of bodily resurrection into it, there is wide agreement that it is one of the very earliest expressions of belief in personal immortality. But, on the other hand, the idea of bodily resurrection is a physical conception, based upon the belief in an earthly Messianic Kingdom, that is to say, a future glorious social order which was to be set up in Palestine by a heavenly, or at least heaven-sent Messiah or leader, and in which the dead are to share. But it follows that they can only share in the blessings of this Messianic Kingdom by being raised from Sheol, the abode of the dead, and by having their original physical existence restored. There is very good reason to believe that this idea is partly of Persian origin, for in the religion of Zoroaster there is a belief which is strikingly similar. Hence in dealing with the Christian doctrine of future existence one problem is how to do justice to these conflicting interpretations of what future existence is to be. Can the two be reconciled, or must we choose between them?

Another problem, which cut across this conflict, was whether future life is for the Jewish nation alone or for individuals as well. Some held that only the nation would be rejuvenated while others said that the righteous dead would share in the

national glory. Those who believed in immortality thought of this future kingdom as an ideal spiritual social order, whereas those who believed in resurrection thought of it as an earthly kingdom. With this latter form of the belief in social immortality went the belief that the earthly reign of the Messiah would last for a thousand years. Hence this glorious future has often been called the *millennium*. Taken up by the early disciples, this idea was combined with the belief in the second coming of Jesus. The church took the place of the Jewish nation, and Christ was to call his people from the ends of the earth and rule in Jerusalem for a thousand years. To the early disciples it was easy and perfectly natural to combine the belief in individual resurrection with the idea of the future rulership of Christ in a glorified social order. Thus in the very beginning of the Christian doctrine of future existence we find a fusion of the individual and of the social conceptions. In all of this the early Christians were largely influenced by the Jewish apocalyptic literature, which, in turn, probably contained many ideas from Zoroastrianism. To-day the theologian is confronted with the task of reconciling the idea of an earthly social future order with the idea of personal immortality.

A third problem was that of rewards and punishments in the future life. At first it was thought that only the righteous dead would be raised up

and share in the joys of the Messianic Kingdom. Similarly only the righteous were thought to be immortal. But later the idea of justice caused the conception to expand to include the wicked. Hence there arose separate doctrines of heaven and hell. Along with this went the idea of a final judgment at the end of the world. Before he begins his Messianic reign Christ will separate the sheep from the goats, and send the wicked into eternal torment; but the righteous, after sharing the blessing of the earthly Messianic Kingdom, will ultimately be translated to the celestial realms where they will repose in everlasting joy and felicity. Here again the influence of Zoroaster is evident. So to-day, in formulating a doctrine of future existence, the theologian has to face the problem of future rewards and punishments, and to inquire whether the belief in a final day of judgment at the end of the world is compatible with the truths of modern science.

A fourth problem, connected especially with the belief in immortality as distinct from the idea of resurrection, is the conception of the preëxistence of the individual person. This seems to have come into Christian theology from Plato. It was first applied to Jesus in the famous passage in Philippians (ii, 5-10); "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself,

taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name." But in the prologue of the Fourth Gospel, which shows clearly the influence of Greek philosophy, the doctrine of Christ's preëxistence is even more fully worked out. To be sure there was a semipersonification of the "wisdom of God" in the Old Testament, so that the identification of Jesus with the "word" in the first chapter of the Gospel of John is probably due as much to Hebrew thought as it is to the idea of the divine reason of Greek philosophy. As a matter of fact it was really a final fusion of the two lines of thought. But the notion of preëxistence has frequently been extended to others besides Christ, especially by thinkers of a mystical type. Thus in his "Intimations of Immortality" Wordsworth writes:

> Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
> The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
> Hath had elsewhere its setting,
> And cometh from afar:
> Not in entire forgetfulness,
> And not in utter nakedness,
> But trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God, who is our home.

The distinguished British philosopher, the late Dr. J. Ellis McTaggart, argued at length that the

idea of immortality involves preëxistence and that any real proof for the former will *ipso facto* prove the latter. Here he is Platonizing, but it must be admitted that there is considerable weight to his argument. This particular problem, however, does not concern us here, since neither the new theists nor the social theologians are committed to the doctrine of preëxistence of every individual.[2]

Thus the thought of the early Christians about future life brought to light a number of different points of view which are exceedingly hard to reconcile. This makes it all the more difficult to comprehend just what is essential in the doctrine for modern men. However, it must be especially emphasized that, on the whole, the outcome of ancient speculation on future life was to make the idea of immortality supreme over that of bodily resurrection. There can be no doubt but what this was as much due to the influence of the Platonic philosophy as it was to the fact that the idea of immortality is more ethical and spiritual than is that of resurrection. By the time of St. Augustine the spiritual ideal of social immortality was combined with that of personal immortality. In the *City of God* this distinguished theologian grasped the idea of a purely spiritual society, the

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2 See R. A. Tsanoff: *The Problem of Immortality*, Chap. iii, for a discussion of Dr. McTaggart's position, as set forth in *Some Dogmas of Religion*.

Holy Catholic Church universal.[3] From this time onward the visible or earthly church is spoken of as the *Church Militant* and the invisible church as the *Church Triumphant.* All the faithful are thought to share in the immortality of the Church Triumphant. Hence social and personal immortality are here indissolubly fused into a single doctrine. This conception dominated the theology of the Middle Ages. Thus when Savonarola stood with the fagots which were to burn him to death ready to be lighted, the Pope's emissary said to him: "I separate you from the Church Militant and Triumphant," and with sublime assurance both of his own immortality and of that of the Invisible Church, he made the memorable reply: "From the Church Militant, but from the Church Triumphant, it is not in your power to do." Admitting the fact that it has been run in various molds during the long course of its history, it must be conceded that a conception similar to that of St. Augustine and Savonarola has remained the central idea in the Christian doctrine of future life to this day. Thus in the idea of spiritual immortality for the individual and for the Holy Invisible Church, universal and triumphant, we do seem to have a doctrine which not only cuts across numerous temporal social orders, with their special

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[3] See Ernst Troeltsch: *Augustin; Die Christliche Antike und das Mittelalter.*

social patterns, but expresses the deepest insight of Christian experience.

Two additional facts need to be kept in mind in estimating the significance of the doctrine of future existence. In the first place, it is well known that Christianity was able to win out in its conflict with the oriental mystery religions in the Roman Empire because it had a satisfactory doctrine of future life and could effectively preach a Christ who had "brought life and immortality to light." For those oriental religions were redemptive religions, offering to men the hope of another life. Christianity, however, was also a redemptive religion with an ethically superior conception of future existence. It is almost an absolute certainty that Christianity would to-day be an extinct religion had St. Paul and his followers not made it clear to the peoples of the ancient world that Jesus Christ was immortal and could bestow immortality upon them. This fact must never be forgotten in considering the importance of this doctrine to Christianity.

The second fact which must be kept in mind is that modern men also have that instinctive hungering for an assurance of immortality which people had in the ancient world. Social conditions have greatly changed, but original human nature is not essentially different. Some writers imply that modern men are not interested in their personal fate. It is commonly asserted that the new

science has made death lose its terrors for the individual. Professor Leuba has made use of the questionnaire method to prove that the belief in future existence is dying out among educated people. Yes, and centuries ago the great Epicurean poet, Lucretius, argued in similar vein to eradicate the fear of death from the minds of Romans, but the vast majority of the Roman people, including many of the élite, became converts to Christianity and the other redemptive religions. Which proves that what is true of a few sophisticated members of a population is not necessarily true of the masses. It is the natural and normal thing for men to revolt at the idea of personal annihilation. Even those in the vigor of life who, under the influence of a philosophical agnosticism or skepticism, pretend to accept with equanimity the belief that this life ends all, have moments when they distrust their own doubt on this matter, showing that the need for an assurance of life is at work within them. The same Laplace who is said to have informed Napoleon, with blatant cocksureness, that he had searched the heavens with his telescope and could find no God anywhere, called in a Catholic priest when he lay dying and asked for the last sacrament of the Church to be administered to him. And his dying words were: "What we know is little, what we do not know is immense." The fact that the crying need for immortality refuses to be suppressed by

naturalistic philosophy is further borne out by these significant words of Baron von Hugel: "Perhaps the most exquisite of all the skeptical minds I have personally known was wont, in his deeper moods, always to end by admitting with me the substantial unanswerableness of the argument that, if man did not somehow have a real experience of objective reality and truth, he—a creature so contingent and subjective through and through —could never, as man actually does in proportion to the nobility of his mind, suffer so much from the very suspicion of a complete imprisonment within purely human apprehensions and values. It is precisely this ineradicable sense of and thirsting after reality which is developed to the utmost by Christianity." [4] Probably the mad rush of modern life, with its attendant distractions, does push the thought of one's own ultimate destiny into the background, but nevertheless it is there, and many experiences come to every individual which bring it vividly before the mind.

As Professor Pratt has rightly pointed out, it is only gradually that it dawns upon a child that he will eventually die, and when it does he finds it extremely difficult to imagine his own death. The normal human being, dominated by the "will to

[4] From a lecture to Oxford students, published in the *Constructive Quarterly*, Vol. VIII, p. 661. Reprinted in the author's *Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 296*ff.*, and quoted here with the permission of E. P. Dutton and Company.

live" or the "instinct of self-preservation" or whatever else the inherent love of life may be called, revolts at the thought that death will annihilate him. And if, like William James, he really be indifferent to his own personal fate, he will almost invariably revolt at the thought of the total extinction of his loved ones and of the sublime personalities he has known. Thus bereavement remains one of the chief of the experiences in human life which drive men to God. Modern people are eager to know whether there is any truth in the Christian doctrine of immortality, and when liberals go so far as to imply that there is not they feel that they are being given a stone after having asked for bread. When such people make up their minds, as many of them have, that modernism has no answer to the profound question "If a man die, shall he live again?", they almost always lose interest in or entirely distrust its whole program. Indeed many intelligent, highly educated people remain in or go back to the conservative fundamentalist theology, just because its spokesmen sincerely believe and fervently preach that Jesus Christ brought life and immortality to light, and that a reasonable assurance of future life can be found through adherence to orthodox theology. Numerous others are being driven into such sects as Christian Science, Theosophy, and other oriental cults in quest for a satisfying answer to the age-old longing for eternal life. Unless

progressive theology speaks in no uncertain terms on this matter it is doomed to defeat. A frank and sincere meeting of the issues is essential to the persistence of modernism as a vital form of Christian belief. What, then, do social theologians and new theists have to offer in the way of a doctrine of future existence?

It used to be thought that future existence could be forthwith established by appealing to the facts that it is universally believed to be real and has been accepted as true by many highly intelligent, saintly men. While there is no doubt about either of these facts, it is not logically permissible to base an argument for the truth of any belief on an appeal to authority and to reverence for great names. This is acknowledged by both schools of progressive theology. After all, the word universal only means that the belief is widely extended among men, but by no means denies that there have always been some who did not accept it. In truth, the thing that is really universal is the crying need for assurance of future life, and it is this which has made the belief so widespread. The universality of the belief in future existence therefore rests upon the universality of the need for assurance of future life. Well, then, does the existence of such a widespread human need argue a reality to supply it? Perhaps so, but this would be to base the argument on analogy with other human needs, such as those of hunger and thirst,

and would really abandon the principle of universality. Nor can the intelligence or moral character of those who reject the belief be impugned simply because they reject it. That could only be done on other grounds, and progressive theologians recognize that in many cases there are no other grounds, since the truth of the belief has often been doubted by men of the highest moral probity. Logically speaking, "universal assent" proves nothing, nor can any proposition be accepted as true because good men believe it. Many false beliefs have at long intervals of time been universally believed true, and good men have not infrequently been known honestly to accept and to act upon beliefs which we now know to be pure superstitions. Hence no progressive theologian, who knows what he is about, can be beguiled by this sort of argumentation.

Orthodox revealed theology rests the case for future existence on the authority of Scripture or on sacred ecclesiastical edicts of Church Councils or Popes. But those who rely, as do all progressive theologians, upon an appeal to reasoning based upon their own religious experience and on that of the religious community in whose life they share, are not in a position so to dispose of the matter. As we have seen, there are two quite different doctrines of future existence in the Scriptures, one of which is based upon the idea of bodily resurrection and one on the idea of the essential

immateriality of man's spirit. The appeal to Scripture makes it impossible to reconcile these opposing points of view with each other, nor does it enable us to square either with modern scientific knowledge. Only those who hold divine revelation to be absolutely supreme over science can rest the case for future existence on an appeal to biblical or ecclesiastical authority. On this point all liberal theologians are agreed.

Recently much ado has been made over the findings of the various psychical research societies, and many intelligent people have hoped to find conclusive evidence for future existence in the scientific investigations of psychic phenomena which these societies are making. In his two-volume work, entitled *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death*, the pioneer in this field, the late Frederick Myers, discusses at length the bearings of these investigations on the Christian doctrine of future existence. But since he wrote numerous other works have been published by such well-known men as Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and the late Dr. James Hyslop, as well as by people of lesser note. While all progressive theologians want to keep an open mind and to reserve final judgment in these matters, they are frankly skeptical of such results as have thus far been made public. Certainly, in the face of the present state of these researches, it would be highly unscientific to say that facts have been

unearthed which definitely establish future existence. Hence social theologians and new theists agree in not making use of this material in their interpretations of the doctrine of future life.

Progressive theologians are also at one in rejecting the theory that the only sanction for morality is to be found in a doctrine of future rewards and punishments. This part of the New Testament conception of future life can only be retained in contemporary theology by giving it an entirely different interpretation to that of fundamentalism, which undoubtedly owes as much to the theological hedonism of Archdeacon Paley as it does to New Testament teaching. It may be admitted that moral distinctions make a difference in future life, just as they make a difference in this life, but virtue is its own reward and vice is its own punishment. The traditional conception of Heaven and Hell, as places of eternal bliss and everlasting torment, must be reinterpreted to accord with modern ethical and cosmological knowledge. The day is past when people can be scared into heaven by the fear of hell. Otherworldliness, in this traditional sense, is an antiquated idea. The fact that we are living in the "here and now" means that our happiness must be found here where we are. Heaven has to become real in present human experience before it can even be comprehended as a future state of blessedness.

With regard to the doctrine of a final day of judgment at the end of the world, J. A. MacCulloch has correctly stated in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* the view of all liberal theologians:

The ideas regarding the end of the world which are found in most eschatologies may be regarded as mythical speculations prompted by knowledge of actual catastrophes in Nature and of its phenomena. The world, as science teaches and as the speculations of men suggested, must have an end; but they pictured that end in lurid colors, while generally anticipating after it a new order. But only in a few eschatologies is the conception of a great Final Judgment found (Parsi, Jewish, Christian, Mohammedan); and this is joined to the doctrine of the world-end, the final catastrophe being the prelude to, or even a part of the action of judgment. Moral and natural events were thus connected, because it seemed fitting to men that the time when their final fates were being decided should synchronize with the close of the world-order. Christianity, and, if we accept Christ's eschatological teaching literally (though, as has been seen, it is not necessary to do so), Christ, Himself, taught this view; but the tendency is now more and more to seek the spiritual conception of judgment, and for men to concern themselves less and less with the close of the world-order as an event to which has been attached, more or less mechanically, the idea of a Last Judgment. The manifestation of God's judgment in the soul of man is regarded as of more importance than the lurid phenomena which have so long been believed to accompany a Final Judgment, and which can have no

relation to the soul or the organism in which it is clothed in a future state.[5]

Progressive theologians, then, are in substantial agreement in rejecting the idea of final judgment at the end of the world, and they are sharply opposed to the hard and fast separation between this world and the world to come which characterizes orthodox revealed theology.

Thus we find several points of agreement between social theologians and new theists in their doctrine of future life. Yet it should be especially emphasized that this agreement is largely negative in character. They are at one in rejecting certain types of argument which have been more or less in favor, and in refusing to approve the subordination of morality in this life to a theory of rewards and punishments in a life to come. But there is a striking difference between them when their positive conceptions of the nature of and of proofs for future life are taken into consideration.

In stating this difference it is necessary to return to the two central problems dealt with in discussing the doctrine of future life of the early Christians. The more radical social theologians

[5] From the article entitled "Eschatology" in Hastings' *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.* Reprinted with the permission of Charles Scribner's Sons. Compare Dean Inge: "We cannot suppose that the civilized world will ever come back to these beliefs. They are not . . . good enough to be true." *Outspoken Essays,* 2nd Series, p. 36.

are attempting to revive the theory that future existence is social rather than personal immortality. Professor Haydon charges new theists with having to support their solution of the problem of evil with the doctrine of individual immortality. And he puts it in such a way as to make it perfectly clear that he thinks this doctrine is out of the question for modern men.[6] But that the social intelligence will continually advance and create in its progress a new and better social order, gradually dropping all evil out of existence, is, as we have already seen, the basic postulate of the social philosophy of Professor Haydon and of the social theologians generally. Now in reviving this antique Jewish and Zoroastrian conception of a glorified earthly social order, and in interpreting it to accord with the modern idea of social evolution, these thinkers have to abandon entirely the conception of physical resurrection. For that conception is admittedly incompatible with modern knowledge of the physiological processes in the human body. Hence individual or personal future existence is *ipso facto* made impossible, since to share in any earthly social order physical existence is indispensable. Consequently the social theologians can only admit *social* immortality.

To be sure, in order to offer some satisfaction to the crying need for assurance of continued

[6] See the reference above, p. 152.

existence of the individual, they combine with this doctrine of social immortality the idea of an immortality of influence. This may mean that, although he ceases to exist as a distinct personality, the individual's actions and their effects continue to function, to a certain indefinable and variable extent, in the lives of those who live after his disappearance. Thus people live on in their children, in their writings, in the institutions to which they contribute and which they help to create, and in the numberless effects their deeds have on those people with whom they come into contact and who in turn transmit their effects to others, so as to form definite lines of influence from one generation to another. No one can doubt that great men of the past continue to influence us even after they have been dead for hundreds of years. Or immortality of influence may mean that one lives in the memories of his friends whenever they think about him after he is gone. But whichever interpretation is accepted, social immortality plus an immortality of influence constitutes the doctrine of future existence of the new social theology.

This conception is undoubtedly entirely consistent with the social philosophy of the social theologians, and with the philosophical dogma of the identity of cosmic evolution and social intelligence, on which that social philosophy is based. It is precisely the doctrine of future existence to

be expected from those who operate with such philosophical presuppositions. Indeed it is the only conception of future life which can be reached when one starts from these premises. For the idea of personal immortality is absolutely incompatible with the evolutionary naturalism on which social theology is based. What, now, is to be thought of it?

At least it may be admitted that it is better than no doctrine of future life at all. Not to think this subject through is an attitude which is all too prevalent in the hurly-burly of modern life. Thought on such matters often goes by default. Many in whom the old faith has been destroyed by the study of science are content just to be skeptical and to wait and see. The social theologians are frank enough to face the issue and to take a position. Moreover, it is some satisfaction to reflect that one's efforts will be projected somewhat into the future and contribute even a little to the making of a better social order. If this is all that is possible in the way of a doctrine of future life, by all means let us cling to it, even though in so doing we admit that we can only know that our efforts are going to count for a better future now, and not when they are actually counting in that future in which we are no more. For how can we know what effects our deeds are having when we are not there to see them? We must take our satisfaction from what they are going to do now before

they do it, and before we are forever sloughed off in the process of social evolution. Yet the immortality of influence is unquestionably a fact in which one may find much comfort.

However, let us not deceive ourselves into thinking that this conception of social immortality is Christian. Undoubtedly its main source is the philosophy of Auguste Comte. To be sure there is a sense in which it revives the conception of the millennium or glorified earthly social order of primitive Christianity, but that idea is only an excrescence of early Christian thought, more due to Zoroastrian and Jewish apocalyptical speculations than to the essential spirit of Christianity. Moreover, that idea is itself eviscerated when the idea of individual resurrection is dropped. We have already seen that it was the conception of spiritual and individual immortality which came to express the profoundest meaning of future life for the early Christians. It was this idea which caused Christianity to triumph over the mystery religions in the Roman Empire, and to attain supremacy in European civilization. It was this belief which steeled the martyrs from Polycarp to Savonarola and Bruno. If modern knowledge really makes it necessary to abandon the belief in personal immortality let us resign ourselves to the fate which awaits us with the serenity of "free men," but let us, like Mr. Bertrand Russell, be frank enough to admit that the success of Christianity was made

possible by the promulgation of a lie and hurl defiance at its deep-seated falsity. If belief in personal immortality has to be rejected the sooner we eliminate Christianity from modern life the better. She is an impostor. For twenty centuries she has preached the lie that Christ Jesus "brought life and immortality to light," that "this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality."

This leads to the bearing of the social theologian's doctrine of future existence on the other fact which was mentioned above as needing to be kept constantly in mind in discussing the doctrine, namely, the fact that modern men need some support for the belief in immortality in order for their lives to have durable meaning. For the real value of the doctrine of an immortality of influence is seriously impaired by the evolutionary naturalism on which social theology is based. An individual's personal contribution to the world and that of his relatives, friends, neighbors, and contemporaries will not be conserved in the evolutionary process for more than a comparatively brief interval of time. Ultimately all of the contributions of every man who is now living on the earth will be swept away. For the theory of value connected with evolutionary naturalism is a vicious relativism, according to which all values whatsoever are entirely lacking in durability. According to that theory of value, it is the satisfying of our human

desires which constitutes values, so that when our desires come to an end with our death whatever values were ours then cease to be ours. Even though they belong to social intelligence they no longer belong to us, for we have been dropped out. If others find satisfaction in anything we did that is their value and not ours. Inasmuch as this theory of value has already been discussed at length in Chapter III, an indication of its application to the doctrine of future life will here suffice.

Imagine, then, a man putting this belief into practice, living it out in everyday life just as well as he possibly can. He tries his best to serve the social intelligence in the only tangible way he knows, which is that of ministering to the needs of people round about him, working for human welfare in the largest sense of that word which is possible according to the interpretation of human welfare implied in the social ethics of the social theologians. He enters upon this life of service with all the enthusiasm and good will which can be born of the conviction that human beings are united against the cosmos in the common enterprise of creating a fairer world-order. But as he works for the realization of the completest life for every human being which earth can conceivably offer, he begins to reflect: "Ere long I shall die and so will these my brothers and comrades in this enterprise of making a completely socialized world." But a voice replies: "Your children and your

children's children and those of your co-workers in this high cause will enjoy the fruits of your labors and hand down your ideals to their posterity." This sets him thinking again, and out of this reflection there comes the retort: "Yes, but in a few hundred years all of my posterity and theirs will be swept away by the natural laws of inheritance. A new generation, a new race of human beings, or, perhaps, of superhuman beings, an entirely new civilization will arise. All the happy groups to which I now belong—my family, my profession, my fraternity, my party, my church, all the precious institutions to which I have contributed and whose values I have helped to create, all the social ideals which I cherished and to actualize which I incessantly labor will have forever passed away. As the social consciousness moves onward in its creative activity a new humanity, which will know and care nothing whatsoever for me and mine, will people this terrestrial ball, and desecrate and despoil even the sacred tombs of all the great men of my day and generation." But the voice replies: "In this new social order of the remote future men and women will be as gods, sipping the delicious nectar of celestial joy." Will he not almost certainly be led to reflect yet awhile longer until out of the chaos of his mind he evolves what Professor Hocking has well called the good realistic maxim: "I will take mine now"? This is the inevitable moral consequence of a doctrine of future

existence which makes individuals and their values playthings of an evolutionary process, even when that process is identified with the social consciousness of humanity. Paraphrasing Hamlet's words "What's he to Hecuba or Hecuba to him," what is a future earthly millennium of the human race to us or what are we to it? Always the conclusion will be: "We will take ours now."

Thus in its conception of the nature of future existence social theology is impotent to meet the needs of men for more abundant life. There is no blinking the fact that it will throw the average man back on the purely hedonistic principle of "eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die." And when we remember that this type of theology makes the truth of beliefs depend on the extent to which they aid man in finding satisfaction for his needs, this is an absolutely fatal consequence. The social theologians' doctrine of future life is, according to their own theory of truth, false because it does not work.

The new theists' conception of future life is that of individual immortality in a spiritual world of personal beings. They hold that this is the essence of the New Testament doctrine, and that it has always remained the central core of Christian teaching on this question. They deny that it is in any way inconsistent with modern knowledge to believe that man, while living out his natural life, can grow into the spiritual over-world on which the

whole natural order depends and from which it gets its meaning. In fact, as the quotation from Professor Hartley B. Alexander at the end of Chapter IV points out, it is essential to human progress that men believe in the continuance of their spiritual being. Immortality of all persons is a direct corollary of the new theists' conception of God as the unified totality of all ethical and spiritual personal life. But this by no means excludes social immortality. In truth it implies that future life is a society of free personal beings of which God himself is the unifying principle. This spiritual society pervades human society now. In this world of struggle and conflict men may participate in it and become aware of its deathless reality. In so far as any one does he claims his divine prerogative and in the midst of time he is eternal. The consciousness of oneness with the divine being which comes to men in worship is at the same time an experience of an objective spiritual reality in which personal immortality is at least conceivable and possible. Hence the idealistic metaphysics on which the new theism rests does not, as does the evolutionary naturalism underlying social theology, exclude the possibility of personal immortality. On the contrary the theistic, as contrasted with the pantheistic, interpretation of this idealistic metaphysics carries with it a doctrine of personal immortality as a direct corollary.

This view of the new theism may be made clearer

by an interpretation of the thoughtful poem entitled "Transmutation," by Harry Kemp:

> Since bit by bit I've died so long,
> I think I shall not mind
> When picks and spades have delved for me
> A hole that's close and blind.
>
> I died a little when a friend,
> Unheeding passed me by,
> And when a person that I loved
> Revealed that love a lie.
>
> I died a little when I stooped
> To a revengeful score—
> Yet, as I've died, so I've been born
> Each day a little more.
>
> With every glimpse of loveliness
> I am the more reborn.
> With every laugh, with every kiss,
> With every shining morn!
>
> So, one day, when they think me dead,
> The truth of truths will be
> That I've just walked out through a door
> To immortality![7]

What does the author mean by these verses? Is it not something like this? Our lives are made up of bodily activities, unnumbered and innumerable. What we see of a person is his physical body and its external actions. Hence every one naturally

[7] By permission from *Chanteys and Ballads* (Brentano's).

does just what the new school of psychology known as *behaviorism* does, namely, identifies a person with his body and its reactions. So we think that the death of the body and the cessation of its activities is the end of the person. Because what our eyes see and our hands handle goes when the body goes, we think that all there is of the person goes. This is not necessarily true. Indeed, a little reflection proves that it is absolutely false. Besides the bodily reactions there are inner appreciations, and both are continually being transmuted by and into the spiritual unity which is the essence of personality. Birth is the beginning and death is the ending of a series of activities and inner appreciations which are natural stages in the unfoldment of earthly life. But behind and beyond this series of activities and inner appreciations, and including both birth and death, there is an eternal spiritual reality. It is the invisible crucible in which life's innumerable relationships are transmuted into a unified whole. And this spiritual whole, which is personality, remains forever an ineradicable part of reality. The author of the above lines on transmutation had the eye of his soul fixed on this spiritual whole when he wrote:

> So, one day, when they think me dead,
> The truth of truths will be
> That I've just walked out through a gate
> To immortality.

The spiritual personality is, by its very nature, indestructibly real, both now and forever.

Imagine, now, a person with this conception of the meaning and destiny of human life going out to work for the welfare of others. As he goes about his ministrations, he too will doubtless frequently reflect on the significance of what he is doing. And he will find hope in the thought that what he does is not to dissolve like clouds. Nor are the activities in which his fellows are engaged of purely passing significance. He and they are creating imperishable values which belong outside of time in an eternal spiritual reality. There is a certain absoluteness about their every deed. They are sojourning here for a season that through their struggles they may create enduring personalities and come to a conscious realization of their destiny. This gives assurance. This makes human activities mean something. This puts definite purpose into the project of making a better world. To know that one's efforts count, to know that the values we create and the deeds we do are of such a character that the evolutionary process can never sweep them away is to reach an assurance which really steels us "to grasp life's nettle." Here is the practical value of the new theists' conception of man's immortal nature. Instead of leading to pessimistic resignation at our doom, or to a life according to the maxim "We will take ours now," this blessed assurance leads us in calm serenity

down through the shadowy, labyrinthine aisles of life; across the deep, awful valley of the shadow of death; up the grand and lofty hilltops of Zion; into the eternal presence of God.

It must be admitted, however, that on the question of the number of people who are immortal new theists differ. Some hold with Professor Hocking to the theory of *conditional immortality*. "There is," he writes, "such a thing as losing one's soul. . . . For if there be any immortality beyond this present scheme of things, it is not in abstraction therefrom; the destiny of our own deeds, great and small, is an integral part of whatever future there may be for us. To deserve to endure is the only guarantee of enduring. I have no faith in an indestructibility of the substance of consciousness. One life is given us, another may be acquired." [8] Such a view seems to offer very little hope for the masses and especially for little children who die before they have a chance to acquire. Hence others hold to a doctrine of *universalism*, according to which God is thought to be able, in His own good time, to bring all human beings unto Himself to share in His eternal reality. The danger in this view is that it seems to limit human freedom, and to make effort at moral and spiritual development unnecessary. But if for future existence progress

[8] W. E. Hocking: *The Meaning of God in Human Experience*, p. 514. This is also the view of R. G. Macintyre as set forth in his *The Other Side of Death*. Compare J. Y. Simpson: *Man and the Attainment of Immortality*.

is assumed the objection no longer holds, since men may still reap the consequence of their own deeds, even though ultimately each will succeed in achieving his destiny of union with God.

In answer to all this the social theologians cry out for proof for personal immortality. But in demanding proof they forget about offering any for their own conception of future existence. One will search the literature of social theology in vain for any proof that human progress is consistent with their interpretation of *social* immortality. That conception is a pure speculative dogma, as is also the doctrine of unified social intelligence on which it rests. This has already been made clear. Surely the new theists have just as much right to assume the reality of the over-world in which man shares, as social theologians have to assume the existence of a unified social intelligence and a future glorified social order to be evolved out of that intelligence.

Various proofs for immortality may be found in the literature of the new theism. The analogical argument, suggested above, that the need for assurance of future existence points to a reality to supply that need is sometimes used and it certainly has some value. John Fiske advanced the argument that immortality must be assumed real to avoid having the evolutionary process come to a halt before it reaches its fullest possible development. Since death arrests earthly growth, may it

not be that this arrest is only apparent and not real, and that man's spiritual evolution continues in another world? Similarly, Dr. Matthews asks: "The goal of evolution—can it be anything else than immortality?" [9] Dr. Dole argues that immortality must be real in order that human values may be guaranteed permanence, it being utterly irrational to think that all of these sublime values are purely ephemeral. Dr. George A. Gordon defends the position that immortality is needed to give God room to accomplish His purpose of bringing all men unto Himself. Other new theists attack the objections to immortality which are based on modern science. Dr. William Osler and William James have exposed the speculative character of these objections. James advanced the theory that the brain, instead of being *productive* of states of consciousness, may serve only as a medium for their *transmission*, thus refuting the most serious objection to immortality which is based on the idea that consciousness is entirely dependent upon the brain. These and other arguments have been offered by new theists in support of their doctrine of future existence.[10] But persuasive though many of these arguments be, they are not cogent proofs in the scientific sense of the word proof. We know

9 *Yale Review*, Vol. XI, p. 352. See above (p. 146).

10 In addition to the references already given, see the various *Ingersoll Lectures on Immortality*. An excellent summary of the arguments will be found in William Adams Brown's *The Christian Hope*, Part II.

too little either to prove or to disprove immortality. This every philosopher ought candidly to admit.

Yet what are all these elaborate attempts to justify the Christian hope but rationalizations of an inner perception of that *élan vital* or life-force which wells up from the hidden recesses of human nature? The ultimate reason for the belief in eternal life must always be that men reach an intuitive sense of it in their personal devotion and worship. That is why the writers of the books of the New Testament taught it. That is why the great religious geniuses never even think of questioning it. Many a devout sorrowing Christian who has gone with one he loved into the valley of the shadow of death, there to part with him forever on these shoals of time, has penetrated the veil of sense and seen him walk out through a door to immortality. To faithful Christians, who have drunk deeply at the fountain of life, no proof for immortality is needed, because they have had an inner intimation of it as a real fact of the spiritual world. When Milton wrote "Lycidas," when Wordsworth wrote "Intimations of Immortality," when Tennyson wrote "In Memoriam," when Shelley wrote "Adonais," when Dean Inge wrote only recently of his experience of bereavement, they did not argue to prove immortality. But as best they could they put into words a spiritual experience of life everlasting which is really incapable of being expressed in language. That these men had such

an experience, and that countless others have had it, and will continue to have it as long as sorrow and bereavement recur, is the ultimate substantiation of the theistic conception of the world, and the standing refutation of all agnostic and naturalistic philosophies of life, religious and irreligious alike. Jesus Christ did bring life and immortality to light. This mortal does put on immortality. There is an abode where the eternal are. We are homing our way to God. This is the unimpeachable testimony of Christian experience.

> I know not how that Joseph's tomb
> Could solve death's mystery,
> I only know a living Christ
> Our immortality.

In the life that is hid with Christ in God, man's spirit intuits its real destiny, and participates in the life of a being compared to whom all earthly existence pales into insignificance.

Chapter VII

SUMMATION

THE central aim of this essay has been to expound the content of liberal Christian thought in such a way as to exhibit the essential differences between social theology and the new theism. In some detail it has been shown that there is a pronounced divergence of opinion between the leading representatives of these two schools. The key to the situation was found in the fact that social theologians break entirely away from the liberal theology which has been developing during the last century, and tie themselves up with the new philosophies of pragmatism and evolutionary naturalism, which in turn go back to the positivism of Auguste Comte, whereas the new theists seek an anchorage in that historic, progressive movement in theology, initiated by Schleiermacher, and endeavor to carry it further.

Thus on the question of method the new theists emphasize the importance of an idealistic metaphysics, and strive to develop and to extend the Schleiermacher-Jamesian method, but the social theologians claim to abandon metaphysical method in the interest of the genetic method of social psy-

chology, although in reality they adopt both the logical and the metaphysical tenets of pragmatism. On the problem of the nature and of the significance of our present social order the new theists, just because they regard every earthly society as inherently finite and limited, treat the existing state of affairs as a medium by the transformation of which men are to achieve personality. Moreover, they firmly believe in the actual reality of a non-temporal society of the redeemed, which pervades the temporal, politico-economic social order, and into which it is man's highest destiny, even here in the midst of time, to grow. But the social philosophy of the social theologians is summed up in the belief that the earthly and temporal order is absolutely the only society there is, and that the one hope for humanity is in making it better. Thus they repudiate the new theists' conception of a super-temporal kingdom of God, and hold that this supposed transcendent society is really only an ideal which is to be made real in some remote stage of the evolution of earthly society.

Again, on the problem of how human beings are to conceive of the divine being, the new theists emphasize the personality of God as tying together the two aspects of immanence and transcendence, whilst the social theologians abandon both the thought of transcendence and that of personality, and strongly emphasize the immanence of God, treating Him as identical with the aspiring social

consciousness—a changing, growing, impersonal activity, pushing itself forward to higher and higher levels of achievement. Then, too, on the vexed problem of evil these two schools of progressive theology offer conflicting interpretations. To theists, evil is to be overcome by reaching an experience of the Perfect One, by communing with the mind of Him in whom there is no evil and for whom the finite ills of our lives are transmuted into good. But to social theologians these evils disprove the existence of such a perfect God, and they can only be routed by human beings coöperating to instill more and more of the quality of creative intelligence into cosmic process. Finally, on the question of future existence, theists believe both in personal and in social immortality, whereas the social theologians accept only the latter and conceive of it as purely temporal in nature. In general, all of these lines of opposition may be summarized in the statement that social theology is wholly immersed in the finite and the relative, whilst the new theism looks at all things *sub specie æternitatis*—from the point of view of the eternal.

In presenting these differences of interpretation and emphasis, although the author could not do otherwise than defend the theistic position, special care has been taken to indicate important values in social theology. In fact, throughout the discussion the intention has been to deal with the highly intricate and abstruse questions from a broad, philo-

sophical point of view, realizing that in speculating on such matters there is likely to be truth in any view which is an honest product of sustained reflection. Yet, if full justice is to be done to social theology, it is necessary that other significant contributions, which it has made and is making to the nobler Protestantism now emerging out of the chaos of conflicting opinions, be especially emphasized. Perhaps they are best approached through a psychological explanation of the widespread vogue of social theology among educated people, particularly here in America. Such an explanation has both a negative and a positive side.

Negatively, social theology represents a vigorous protest against the overindulgence in uncritical speculation, which characterized the nineteenth century, and which expressed itself in an almost interminable division of Protestant Christianity into sects. Denominationalism is really the fruit of an almost unparalleled process of theological hair-splitting. From the beginning social theologians have stood out against sectarianism, and have substituted for its bigotry and intolerance a strong emphasis on brotherly love and denominational cooperation in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and philanthropic work of the churches. Moreover, traditional Protestantism has been and is seriously handicapped by an extreme individualism in religious thought and practice, and by the fact that it is inclined to accept without criticism

the customs and institutions of existing society. Almost every vigorous and unique personality gathered a group of followers who perpetuated his particular interpretation of the faith once for all delivered unto the saints. The growing demand for social reforms was opposed by prominent churchmen to such an extent that the masses came to feel that the Church was their deadliest enemy. As a result of all this Protestantism was in serious danger. Social theology, with its decided emphasis on coöperation, mutual good will, and social democracy was welcomed by many as being precisely what was needed to revivify Protestant Christianity.

This leads directly to the positive side of the explanation for the success of this type of theology. For not only was it welcomed by many denominational leaders as a means of revivifying church life and as a successful protest against the vices of sectarianism. The secretaries of the various denominational departments, as well as all of those who were engaged in promoting the practical side of church work, naturally began to think that what they were doing was far more important than theological discussion and disputation. Especially did they resent being hampered in the solicitation of funds for the carrying on of their work by quarrels within the denomination over insignificant doctrinal matters. This created a demand on their part for a "theology for the Social Gospel"—to

use the late Dr. Walter Rauchenbusch's terminology. To meet this demand the more progressive theological seminaries of the country were reorganized to include a preponderance of instruction in practical Christianity. Systematic Theology and Philosophy of Religion were subordinated to Social Ethics. As a result many young ministers were sent out to the churches with a glowing enthusiasm for practical activities and with almost no interest in doctrinal questions. Moreover, such doctrine as they had been taught was just sufficient to create in them an unsettled state of mind, and to set them at variance with the traditional theology of practically all of their parishioners. Forced by the exigencies of the situation to compromise and to hedge on doctrinal issues, and to concentrate their attention on practical activities, their sermonizing was too often little more than propagandizing for social service bureaus.

At the same time the religious press of some of the large denominations began to come under the control of practical experts who had very little interest in doctrinal theology. The Sunday school, and general religious education literature, as well as the weekly church papers, were thoroughly reorganized. The question of what to believe was shoved into the background, and all these publications became mediums for the inculcation of the social service idea. Then, too, the large denominations created special social service departments,

with a paid secretary and a corps of workers to organize this side of the practical activities of the local churches.

Nor can the influence of the powerful interdenominational organizations be overlooked. For years, and with rapidly growing strength, such institutions as the International Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, the International Sunday School Union, and the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, as well as other less influential organizations, have been hammering away at denominationalism. Their watch-cry has been: *Stress service and say not one word about doctrine,* but in practicing this motto they have helped to make the idea of service into a doctrine of the widest range and moment.

All of this has given social theology a decided impetus. In some sects its sympathizers are the responsible directors of most of the denominational efforts. To-day its sagacious leaders realize full well the importance of working from the top down. By getting control of central offices of the denominations, of the theological seminaries and church colleges, of the religious press, and of interdenominational organizations, they hope to carry to a successful conclusion their program of peaceful penetration, leavening the whole lump of Protestantism with the new ideas.

Viewed as a whole, no one can question the value of this movement. It was probably the only way

in which the public mind could have been prepared for a real advance in Christian thought and practice. The old denominational and sectarian issues have ceased to appeal. They have been effectively routed in the effort to apply Christianity to the real problems of modern life. Men are actually becoming ashamed of denominational names and creedal shibboleths. Social theology has had a great deal to do with the ushering in of this new attitude. It deserves credit for its slashing attack on denominationalism, for the enthusiastic and effective support it has given to the great cause of a closer union of Protestantism, and for the insistent demand it is making for social justice and the melioration of industrial conditions.

Then, too, it has been earnestly concerned to save the younger generation, especially in the colleges and universities, from a complete surrender to agnosticism and atheism. Recognizing the movement of revolt against traditionalism and orthodoxy among the *intelligentsia*, and the danger of this developing into an open hostility to every religious interpretation of life, the social theologians have made an heroic effort to stem the tide and to hold the youth of America to their Christian vows. By emphasizing social service as the essence of religion, by portraying Jesus as a social reformer, and by interpreting his teachings as a challenge to abuses in the industrial social order, in the midst of which we live, they have been able,

at least to an appreciable extent, to attract and to control for Christianity the inherent idealism of youth. Many who had abandoned traditional doctrines found in the Social Gospel a new hope. For saving many of our young men and women from the invidious consequences of a purely atheistic attitude toward life social theology is entitled to high praise. Even though, in their ardor, the more radical of the social theologians have surrendered too much in abandoning as insupportable the belief in the transcendence of God and in personal immortality, they have nevertheless made it possible for many thinking people to remain within the Christian fold. Unquestionably Nietzsche, Haeckel, Bertrand Russell, and other avowed antireligionists would have more followers in America to-day if it were not for the influence of social theology.

Moreover, the social theologians have strongly supported the growing movement among men all over the world for a closer interweaving of alien races and cultures. Their attacks on race prejudice and narrow national insularity, their condemnation of the exploitation of backward peoples, their scathing denunciation of the militaristic oppression of the unarmed, but highly cultured, peoples of the earth, and their numerous efforts to bring about a better mutual understanding on the part of conflicting groups and classes have already yielded good fruit. All of this is thoroughly

Christian, and it is fraught with incalculable benefit for the future of humanity.

Fundamentalism is now strengthening its opposition to the tightening grip of the social theologians on denominational and interdenominational control. Its leaders are fearfully alarmed. They think that religious people are being led away from the really vital issues of Christianity by an overemphasis on social melioration. They would call the rank and file of the membership back to the verbal inspiration theory of the Scriptures, and to the general doctrinal position of the seventeenth century. They are terribly afraid of the evolutionary naturalism and of the meliorism which is being taught to the young people, from among whom the future leaders of the Church must be recruited. They think that Protestantism is in grave danger of becoming merely an eleemosynary institution, and of ceasing to be distinctively religious. They hold that the springs of devotion are being dried up by an exaggerated emphasis on working for social betterment, by a neglect of the spiritual welfare of the individual person, and by the attempt to substitute secular knowledge and general culture for inner religious piety.

There can be no question but what the fundamentalists are right in thinking that there are grave dangers latent in this new trend. If the extreme radical wing of social theology has its way Protestant Christianity will surely disappear.

Community social centers will take the place of churches. One of the leading clergymen among those who have completely surrendered to the most radical teachings of the social theologians, the Reverend John Haynes Holmes, has actually succeeded in turning his own church into such a community center, and in his book entitled *New Churches for Old*, he argues that this is the goal toward which Protestantism should move. But if this happens generally, Protestant Christianity will become absorbed in philanthropy and the complete secularization of the life of its adherents will be achieved.

On the other hand, the social theologians charge the fundamentalists with being reactionary to such an extent that they are inflicting an irreparable injury on Protestantism. To ask modern men to accept the theory of verbal inspiration, along with all of its implications, is to ask of them the impossible. The rapid enlargement of human knowledge makes it out of the question for educated people to think in terms of orthodox revealed theology. Thus social theologians argue that the success of the fundamentalist movement could only be a retrogression to seventeenth century theological bigotry, and would, in the long run, lead to the complete disappearance of Protestantism as an effective force in human life.

Nor can any well-informed person doubt the truth of this argument. Verbal inspiration is no

saving principle for educated people. We can never turn back the clock of time to the seventeenth century. The Christian Church must move forward with the other institutions of human civilization or be swallowed up by some more worthy organization.

Yet who can believe that either of these eventualities is to be the real destiny of Protestant Christianity? Who can believe that the mighty movement initiated by Martin Luther will ever fizzle out into the community center type of activity? Who can believe that its development will be arrested and its energies consumed in a recrudescence of a type of thinking which it has already outgrown? Let all apostles of gloom rave on. The recent uniting of the three largest denominations in Canada; the fruitful Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work, held in the summer of 1925 in Stockholm; and the growing unification of effort on mission fields all belie their chatterings. All of the evidence points to the fact that Protestant Christianity is now nearing a confluence of its three great streams. Into the main current of individual righteousness, piety and devotion, which is the real essence of fundamentalism, will flow the current of social idealism issuing from social theology and the current of philosophical sanity welling up from the new theism. And fifty or a hundred years hence, when all of these currents merge to form the river of a United

Protestant Church, that powerful stream will cut its channel deep and wide, the now ruffled waters will subside and clarify, and Protestantism will move majestically and calmly onward to the accomplishment of its destiny. This much seems certain. But faith, the substance of things hoped for, might give to the eye of the prophet a power to penetrate deeper into the mysterious haze of futurity.

Peering into the distant centuries a far-visioned seer might espy the confluence of the river of Protestantism with another, already made mighty from the reunion of the Greek and Roman Catholic Churches. Yes, and in the more distant ages he might even dimly see this more mighty river of a United Christianity receiving into itself the precious purified waters of Judaism, Mohammedanism, and the other ethical and monotheistic religions of the world. Then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ." For of all the evolving processes we know here on the earth religion is the highest, and of all the stages in the evolution of religion ethical monotheism such as is found in Christianity is the highest. Let us, then, cherish the hope that the lower will never be able to prevent the triumph of the highest, in which the power of God is supremely concentrated.

Yet neither in a generation nor in a millennium

shall these things be accomplished. Not until the numberless ages have elapsed which God knows are necessary to consume the crass superstitions, the bigotry, and the intolerance of all of these religions, including Catholic and Protestant Christianity; not until the method of proselyting gives place to that of mutual understanding and good will; not until those hostile to religion drop the scales from their eyes and baptize their spirits in the light of the Eternal Truth, shall these visions of the seer be realized upon the earth. And this means that they may never be fully realized, since old earth may be called home before these æons elapse. But whether they are or not, thanks be to God, the devout may find fellowship and peace in the more than earthly Holy Church, Universal, Militant and Triumphant, in which there is neither Catholic nor Protestant, Jew nor Mohammedan, Buddhist nor Brahmin, Confucian nor Taoist, but all are God's, and He is over all, blessed forever!

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